

Why these regions?

Cars, Muro says.

"This clustering follows logically from the fact that the auto industry--highly concentrated in the Midwest and upper South--currently employs nearly half of all industrial robots in use," the study said.

The recent growth occurred for a reason.

Robots have been popular for the last 20 years, but the growth since the last recession has been striking. It's also been logical.

It followed the government's auto industry bailout of 2009.

"The crisis and near-death of the auto industry clearly reinforced really intensive efforts to reinvent and boost productivity," Muro said in a telephone interview. Some of that "was demanded" by the bailout, "essentially demanding better practices and productivity."

The number of robots is interesting. Other numbers are more telling.

Nationwide, there were nearly 235,000 industrial robots in the United States in 2015. Michigan had the most -- 27,632, followed by Ohio's 20,415.

But density of robots, measured by their number in a state's workplaces compared with the number of workers, reveals more. Indiana, Kentucky and Alabama, for example, have fewer residents than Ohio, and therefore fewer workers. They also have fewer robots.

But they have more robots on a per capita basis, measured by the number of robots for every 1,000 workers. That suggests robots have played a significant role in their workforce changes and in the states' economies.

Check out Tennessee. Its factories have almost half as many robots as Ohio's, and it has a smaller overall population. But on a robot-per-worker basis, Tennessee matches Ohio.

What about Ohio?

We mentioned that the Toledo area is among the leaders in robots. But that's on a per capita basis. If you want to look at the raw number of robots, the Cincinnati metro area, which includes northern Kentucky, is top in the state, followed by Cleveland and Columbus.

Here's a look at the numbers. The blue lines show the number of industrial robots in each metro area in 2010. The red lines show the growth by 2015.

But let's look a different way.

It's no coincidence that the longest lines fall in parts of Ohio with the most people, the most jobs and the broadest economic bases. Sure, those cities have a lot of robots. But they also have a lot of factories without robots.

How can we tell? Brookings makes it easy by supplying per-capita numbers, too. Look how things change when you view robots on the basis of 1 robot for every 1,000 workers.

What's the deal with Akron?

So why does Akron have so few robots compared with living, breathing workers?

We asked a few experts. First, it's important to remember the strong correlation between the auto industry and robotics. That's why Toledo, Springfield, Lima, Mansfield and Youngstown rank so high. Half of all industrial robots are in plants making cars and trucks, said Brookings' Muro.

Akron's low per-capita number also reflects the kind of industries using -- and not using -- robots right now. A company is willing to invest in a robot that can save it money on repetitive tasks, or do jobs that don't require piece-by-piece, project-by-project adjustments.

Robots work well for assembly of cars and trucks. They are good when heavy lifting is involved. But Akron has developed an industrial base that focuses on polymers, coatings, chemicals and lighter materials. Akron workers do research and development and make pieces and parts shipped elsewhere for final assembly. The workers play a role in the supply chain.

These are jobs not necessarily requiring or aided by robotics, said Eric Amis, dean of the University of Akron's College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering.

Amis, like others interviewed, said that was his guess, although they all acknowledged they are speculating because they have not looked into it more deeply.

"We don't have heavy footprints," said Richard Redabow, executive vice president of the Greater Akron Chamber. By that, he means large industrial plants of 500,000 or 1 million square feet. "We don't have heavy industrial, but we have specialty manufacturing."

The I-75 corridor plays a role.

Ryan Ausburger, vice president of the Ohio Manufacturers' Association, said all this rang true, and he suggested looking at another perspective: a map showing manufacturing density, or the share of manufacturing jobs in every Ohio county. While it doesn't directly correlate with where the robots are, it adds to the understanding of why the Toledo area ranks so high.

The common denominator, he said, is the Interstate 75 corridor that runs straight up Ohio's western side, connecting the state to Michigan's auto industry. I-75, he said, "is a line that supports automaking."

This leads to President Trump.

So about robots: They do work once performed by people. And workers who are displaced and cannot find replacement jobs tend to get anxious. That may have played out in the 2016 presidential election.

"It is telling that the robot incidence in red states that voted for President Trump in November is more than twice that in the blue states that voted for Hillary Clinton," Muro says in his paper, citing Brookings' research using data from the International Federation of Robotics.

"This is not to say robots determined the outcome of the 2016 election," Muro adds. "However, the red-state robot concentration does suggest that to the extent industrial automation brings difficult labor market transitions and anxiety, it will visit those difficulties most heavily on a particular swath of red-leaning America--specifically, the most robot-exposed locations in the industrial Midwest."

If you know Ohio, you might shake your head at this, because while it's true that Trump carried Ohio, Toledo -- the metro area where robots have had the biggest impact -- still votes Democratic.

But winning elections is all about the margins.

Clinton won Lucas county, whose seat is Toledo, just as Democrats always do. But her margin of victory (she carried Lucas with 56.1 percent of the vote) was lower than any Democrat's in a

presidential election since 1992, according to a post-election analysis by cleveland.com data analysis editor Rich Exner.

What the future holds.

Muro isn't convinced the march of robots spells doom. "It should not be assumed that a high number" for robot density "is a scary number and negative," he said.

Such a number can spell efficiency and technological advances in the workplace.

But "there certainly is displacement" and anxiety, he added.

That is bolstered by a research paper in March from MIT economists who concluded "robots may reduce employment and wages."

That study looked at past losses. Later this year, Brookings hopes to examine the implications for the future. Meanwhile, asked what this all means to a worker in Cleveland, Muro said, "I think it's a wake-up call."

Workers, employers, politicians and the government will need to consider how to adapt -- and how to help the current workforce as well as displaced workers -- as automation spreads, aided by advances in artificial intelligence. This has implications beyond the factory.

"The bottom line," Muro said, "is that this is a reminder that workers are going to need new skills and a new mindset, because clocking in and doing a routine job is going to be done by robots."

Cleveland Clinic ends association with Trump's Mar-a-Lago: Ohio Politics Roundup

Posted on August 18, 2017 at 6:20 AM

Clinic pulls plug on Mar-a-Lago gala: The Cleveland Clinic, facing criticism for continuing to hold an annual fundraising gala at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, announced Thursday it was canceling plans to hold the 2018 event there, cleveland.com's Stephen Koff reports.

The announcement follows a decision by Clinic CEO Toby Cosgrove "and top executives of some of the nation's leading corporations on Wednesday to disband a business advisory council that reported to the president," Koff writes. "They said Trump's recent comments on last weekend's violence in Virginia by neo-Nazis and Ku Klux Klan supporters were inappropriate and didn't represent the values for which they and their organizations stood."

The pressure to move the event began long before this week, Koff notes. "The Mar-a-Lago controversy erupted soon after Trump took office in January and signed an executive order to temporarily ban people from Syria and other Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States. This affected medical students and young doctors doing residencies at American hospitals, including the Cleveland Clinic."

The Crystal Ball knows: Kyle Kondik, managing editor of Sabato's Crystal Ball and a Cleveland-area native, has a new analysis titled "Governors 2017-2018: The Democrats' Complicated Path to Big Gains." Kondik, who is with the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, concludes that the Republican candidate who wins the nomination for Ohio governor next year "likely is going to be a more proven vote-getter than the Democratic candidate." (He notes that the current favorite is Attorney General Mike DeWine, "but he faces other serious, seasoned challengers.")

If Richard Cordray, director of the Consumer Financial Protection bureau, decides to jump into the Democratic race, he "has the potential to make a big splash," says Kondik, who notes for full disclosure that he used to work for Cordray when Cordray was Ohio's attorney general.

"However, it is also not obvious to us that state and national Democrats are necessarily united in pining for his candidacy, and he'll have work to do just to get through the primary," Kondik writes.

More 2018 prognostication: The Cook Political Report released its monthly projections for next year's crop of U.S. Senate races on Thursday. The site grades Democratic Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown's re-election effort as "leans Democratic" (one notch away from "toss-up.") That's the same rating as last month, for those keeping score at home.

Ohio GOP cattle call: The four 2018 Republican Ohio governor candidates all will attend the first forum of this election cycle, the Columbus Dispatch's Darrel Rowland writes.

The event is Oct. 8. "Republican pollster Frank Luntz will interview each candidate individually for 15 to 20 minutes in the event, sponsored by Citizens for Community Values and Salem Media Group," according to Rowland. CCV is a Southwest Ohio social-conservative group, and Salem Media Group is a Christian-radio network.

"Organizers say all four candidates have confirmed attendance: Attorney General Mike DeWine, Secretary of State Jon Husted, U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci of Wadsworth, and Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor."

Brown backs Whaley: It's not exactly what it sounds like. As the Dayton Daily News' Laura Bischoff riffs, it's not Sherrod Brown, but his daughter, Columbus City Councilwoman Liz Brown, who has endorsed Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley's candidacy in next year's Democratic gubernatorial primary.

Sherrod Brown has not backed any Democratic candidate for governor, and he has indicated he does not plan to pick sides in the primary.

Still crazy after all these years: In cleveland.com's second installment of the "Out of Line" series, data expert Rich Exner traces the long history of gerrymandering and concludes the dubious tradition "is alive and well, perhaps to a greater degree than ever in Ohio."

In case you haven't caught up, the series "will search for a better way - highlighting over the next several months how some other states and countries block, or diminish, the role of politicians from the process of mapping political districts."

Grandpa Dennis: Politico Playbook reported Wednesday on a new arrival that has made former U.S. Rep. and presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich a proud grandfather. "Jackie Kucinich, Washington bureau chief for the Daily Beast and a CNN political analyst and Jared Allen, senior director for media relations at the National Automobile Dealers Association, welcomed Evelyn June Allen, who was born on Tuesday at 11:08 a.m. at Sibley Memorial Hospital, weighing in at 6 lbs. 12 oz.," Playbook reported.

Kucinich shared his excitement about the impending birth during a recent visit to cleveland.com in which he discussed rumors about his current political aspirations.

Jimmy D's lifeline? A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision could give disgraced former Cuyahoga County Commissioner Jimmy Dimora's lawyers an opening to try to get him out of prison, cleveland.com's Eric Heisig writes.

Heisig broke down two recent cases that overturned corruption convictions for a pair of prominent politicians -- a 2014 U.S. Supreme Court ruling for former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell and a 2015 federal appellate decision for former New York Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver -- to examine their similarities and differences with Dimora's case. Dimora is serving a 28-year prison sentence for various corruption charges.

Democratic state rep offended by GOP colleague's Confederacy comments: In a Thursday conference call organized by the Ohio Democratic Party, State Rep. Stephanie Howse, a Cleveland Democrat, offered her two cents on GOP Butler County State Rep. Candice Keller's recent Facebook

post defending confederate monuments. (The post apparently has been deleted or made private since we mentioned it in Wednesday's roundup.)

"I believe she is a person operating from a place that is built from white supremacy," said Howse, the chair of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, according to cleveland.com's Seth Richardson. "The Confederacy, it was based on keeping slavery alive and well, which was the destruction of the black community and our African-American community. That's what it was. To say that it's anything else but that, you're being disingenuous."

In related news: Willoughby South High School, in Lake County, will no longer use a Confederate-capped mascot, but will still refer to its team as the "Rebels," following a decision announced Thursday by the Willoughby-Eastlake city school district, cleveland.com's Emily Bamforth writes.

RX issue ballot language approved: "The Ohio Ballot Board approved language Thursday afternoon for how a prescription drug proposal will be presented on the Nov. 7 ballot, with no conflict between the sides lined up for and against Issue 2," writes cleveland.com's Laura Hancock.

Husted brokered a meeting between the groups supporting and opposing the measure to negotiate the summary language, which is a little more than 100 words long.

The Ohio Ballot Board also approved summary language for Issue 1, a victims-rights proposal known as "Marsy's Law."

Jackson endorsement - Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson notched an important, if unsurprising endorsement in his re-election bid on Thursday. Dave Wondolowski, executive secretary of the Cleveland Construction and Building Trades Council, called Jackson a "friend of labor" as he officially offered the Jackson campaign the trade council's support.

The council, a group of 27 unions representing 14,000 workers on construction sites, is a key player in city politics, and has benefited from the downtown construction boom under Jackson's watch. Wondolowski also is one of the two Democrats on the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections.

SEIU weighs in: A local chapter of the Service Employees International Union also issued an endorsement in the Cleveland mayor's race Thursday. SEIU Local 1 backed City Councilman Jeff Johnson, who is running with the heavy backing from another SEIU chapter. The group also endorsed a full slate of City Council challengers, including Joe Jones, a former city councilman running for Ward 1

Councilman Terrell Pruitt's seat, and Mansfield Frazier, a radio host and activist running for Councilman T.J. Dow's Ward 7 seat.

Why this matters: These endorsements illustrate the divide between two major Cleveland labor groups. Jackson and the building-trades council, which represents higher-wage, skilled workers, oppose a ballot issue to set a Cleveland-only \$15 minimum wage. Johnson, who is challenging Jackson from the left, and SEIU, which represents lower-paid service workers, have championed the \$15 minimum wage.

Yost gets theological: Ohio Auditor Dave Yost landed in some mildly hot water with the Cleveland Jewish News over an Aug. 13 tweet he issued in the aftermath of the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

As the CJB's Ed Carroll described it, Yost, a Republican candidate for Ohio Attorney General in 2018, intended for his tweet to be "a unifying message in the wake of violence in Charlottesville, Va., but caused confusion with some people who don't practice Christianity."

Yost tweeted a verse from the New Testament chapter of Galatians that reads: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

"Yost said for people who share his Christian faith, the distinctions of race and status in a society are irrelevant before God," according to the article. He also told Carroll "he does not interpret the verse as saying only those who follow Jesus Christ can achieve salvation, and wasn't sure how anyone could read the verse as such," and offered up an Old Testament verse that he said holds a similar meaning.

"I tweeted that out because I deeply resent the people on the so-called 'alt-right' who claim Christian underpinnings and spew hatred toward specific groups of people," Yost told Carroll. "I put several other tweets out that spoke to this more contemporary, secular language, but I was really targeting people who share my faith by profession, whether that would be those that were expressing the hatred or those who were confused about how to react to that hatred."

THE ENQUIRER

PX: John Cranley takes sides in Ohio governor's race

Published 6:34 p.m. ET Aug. 17, 2017 | Updated 8:04 p.m. ET Aug. 17, 2017

Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley is taking sides in the Ohio governor's race, endorsing fellow Southwest Ohioan Nan Whaley in the Democratic primary.

Whaley, the Dayton mayor, is rolling out some endorsements for her first statewide race this week, and her campaign confirmed the Cranley endorsement to Enquirer statehouse reporter Jessie Balmert on Thursday.

Cranley passed over endorsing the Greater Cincinnati candidate in next year's Democratic primary – Connie Pillich of Montgomery. But Cranley's support of Whaley comes as no surprise.

The Democrats have worked closely since being elected to lead Southwest Ohio's two largest cities in 2013. Cranley and Whaley started the bipartisan Ohio Mayors Alliance last year, an effort to help the state's largest cities collectively lobby federal and state lawmakers to increase funding in urban areas.

Whaley's campaign isn't concerned about how the endorsement might play if Cranley loses his re-election bid in November. Cranley is locked in a tough race with City Councilwoman Yvette Simpson, who beat the incumbent handily in the May primary.

Whaley's campaign isn't concerned about Cranley's reputation of being cozy with Republicans, either. Nor should it be. That's more of a reputation Cranley's local political enemies have slapped on him, and he is well regarded by statewide Democratic leaders. Cranley has been endorsed by the Ohio Democratic Party in the mayor's race.

Cincinnati's mayor is known as a prodigious fundraiser, and Whaley needs Cranley's deep-pocketed donor connections to bolster her campaign in a crowded primary. Whaley is one of four Democratic candidates running for governor, and the list is likely to grow with the expected addition of Richard Cordray any day now.

Former Congresswoman Betty Sutton and state Sen. Joe Schiavoni are the other Dems in the race.

Whaley has been spending a lot of time in Cincinnati the past several months connecting with some of Cranley's donors. Whaley's brother, David Whaley, is a Cincinnati-based attorney who has close relationships with some of Cranley's surrogates.

"There is no one better suited to be our next governor than my friend and fellow mayor, Nan Whaley," Cranley said in a statement. "Nan has spent her career standing up for the middle class and progressive

values. She will take that determination into the governor's office and be a governor for every Ohioan. Nan is a true public servant."

Could Southwest Ohio win 4,000-job Toyota-Mazda plant?

Published 10:09 a.m. ET Aug. 17, 2017 | Updated 7:25 a.m. ET Aug. 18, 2017

Officially, Ohio isn't saying whether it's trying to land Toyota and Mazda's new U.S. plant.

States are falling over each other to win the Japanese companies' new factory, with its 4,000 assembly jobs and work for thousands more at parts suppliers and logistics firms. Those jobs would sure help boost the sluggish economy in Ohio, where, if workers know how to do anything, it's build cars. Ohio ranks second in auto manufacturing states, after Michigan.

"We do not share whether or not we are in project discussions with companies," said Matt Englehart, a spokesman for JobsOhio, the state's privatized economic development arm.

Despite the "no comment," JobsOhio provided The Enquirer with a list of the state's top selling points to an auto manufacturer who might want to consider Ohio for its next new factory. Just in case, you know.

A couple of factors even point to Southwest Ohio.

1. If you build it...

Chief on Ohio's list of selling points: The state boasts several sites of more than 1,000 acres that are ready for a manufacturing plant to break ground at a moment's notice. They are already hooked up to electric, water, sewer and fiber optic cables, with access to roads and routes to airports, JobsOhio says.

One of those sites: a tract of 1,043 acres in Mount Orab. Kelly Cole, the Brown County economic development director, wouldn't say whether the site is being pitched to Toyota and Mazda, but confirmed the location has all utilities in place.

Toyota and Mazda want to open their new plant by 2021.

2. Home away from home

Toyota already has factories in neighboring Indiana and Kentucky and engineering operations in Erlanger, Kentucky, and in Michigan. The part of Ohio that would keep the Toyota-Mazda plant closest to most of those locations: Southwest Ohio, of course.

Locating Toyota's next plant near existing factories also would keep it close to its parts suppliers, saving shipping time and money.

Of course, unlike Ohio, neighboring states have right-to-work laws that could appeal to Toyota and Mazda. Still, Honda has managed to keep its Ohio factories free of collective bargaining.

3. We have these friends in Southwest Ohio...

A new Toyota parts supplier is already setting up shop in the Dayton area.

Montgomery County broke ground in June on a factory that will supply Toyota, among other automakers, with vehicle parts. Hematite International, a Canadian company, recycles plastic and turns it into linings and insulation to minimize noise and deflect water from a vehicle.

Plus, every chance he gets, Gov. John Kasich mentions Ohio's success in landing Chinese auto glass manufacturer Fuyao in an old General Motors truck plant outside of Dayton.

Bringing a new Japanese auto plant to Ohio, perhaps even near Fuyao in Southwest Ohio, would create quite the chest-thumping victory for American manufacturing – especially since the Toyota Corolla, set to be built at the new plant, originally was scheduled for a factory in Mexico.

4. High-tech hub

Ohio has already become a national leader in the effort to roll out more connected and electric vehicles, the kind of cars Toyota and Mazda plan to make part of their collaboration. Columbus last year beat out tech hubs such as Austin, Pittsburgh and San Francisco for a federal self-driving vehicle grant – part of \$400 million the Columbus area has compiled to set up for connected and electric vehicles.

A test track 50 miles outside of downtown Columbus is building the industry's largest high-speed intersection, where connected vehicles can approach at full speed while relying on technology to allow them to pass within seconds.

Thanks to fiber optic cables and sensors, highways around Columbus and across the northern part of the state already are testing grounds for self-driving or platooning vehicles. Platooning happens when trucks drive close to each other at efficient, high speeds, using technology to brake simultaneously.

Language for prescription drug issue unanimously approved

Published on Aug. 17, 2017 | Updated 1:47 a. m.

COLUMBUS — They may be fighting on the airwaves, but both sides of a controversial prescription drug issue on Thursday compromised on language that will greet voters at the ballot box.

That may decrease the chance of litigation prior to voters having their say on Nov. 7, but potential litigation after the vote remains an issue in the ballot language itself.

The bipartisan Ohio Ballot Board unanimously approved the language for contentious Issue 2, which would tie state spending for prescription drugs to what the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs pays, as well as for Issue 1 — the so-far uncontroversial measure to etch a victims' bill of rights into the Ohio Constitution.

Such mediation prior to a ballot board meeting was unprecedented. The board writes the summary language that, in many cases, is the first description of a proposed state law or constitutional amendment that voters will see.

"This has the potential to be a very high profile, contentious, and expensive ballot issue," said Secretary of State Jon Husted, the board's chairman. "Having experienced those things in the past, we thought we would try something new this time."

In the past, parties on both sides would try to influence the board to include provisions or trigger words in the ballot summaries that they hoped would elicit the responses they want from voters.

Issue 2, the so-called Ohio Drug Price Relief Act, will appear on the ballot with two summary bullet points noting generally that:

- The state and its agencies would not pay more for prescription drugs than the V.A. does.
- Ohio's attorney general would be obligated to defend the law against challenges in court. Petitioners behind it would have legal standing in such cases with taxpayers covering their legal fees. Should the law be struck in court as unenforceable, petitioners would pay the state \$10,000.

"... [It] gives the four petitioners — three of whom work for (Michael) Weinstein, the California health-care CEO who is footing the bill for this — this unprecedented right to intervene in any legal challenge that might be filed against this law if it passes and requires the taxpayers of Ohio to pay their legal fees," said Dale Butland, spokesman for Ohioans Against the Deceptive Rx Ballot Issue.

"That could get expensive for taxpayers because Mr. Weinstein has filed 52 lawsuits in seven states against government entities," he said.

Dennis Willard, spokesman for Ohio Taxpayers for Lower Drug Prices, said, "They're making a big issue out of every little thing because they don't have a good answer to the fact that voting "yes" on Issue 2 would lower drug prices for 4 million Ohioans and save taxpayers \$400 million.

"After we win in November, if someone sues — and the only people who would sue would be the drug companies who are trying to protect their profits — the people who spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to save taxpayers \$400 million would have a right to be in the courtroom, too," he said.

If passed, the citizen-initiated statute, unlike a constitutional amendment, could be amended or repealed by lawmakers at any time.

The issue has been the subject of TV ad wars for months as opponents argue that such a law could have the opposite effect of raising prescription drug prices for vulnerable populations while proponents claim such arguments are being pushed by drug manufacturers who seek to protect their bottom lines.

The ballot board also wrote the summary language that will greet voters on Issue 1, the so-called Marsy's Law that would spell out the rights of victims in crime proceedings.

Unlike Issue 2, there has been no organized opposition. Issue 1 has been largely financed by Henry T. Nicholas, a California tech entrepreneur born in Cincinnati, in memory of his sister, Marsalee Ann. The college student was shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend in 1983.

CantonRep.com
CONNECTING STARK COUNTY

State law bans dogs from outdoor dining area at Gervasi Vineyard

Posted Aug 17, 2017 at 9:08 AM, Updated Aug 17, 2017 at 5:00 PM

CANTON Dining out with the doggy at Gervasi Vineyard is no longer allowed, due to enforcement of a state regulation by the city's Health Department.

Scott Swaldo, general manager of the Italian bistro, told customers on Facebook and through the restaurant's website this week that Gervasi has cancelled its increasingly popular Pups on the Piazza and Patio.

Since July 2016, the restaurant has allowed patrons to bring dogs to its outdoor patio from noon to closing on Tuesdays. On some Tuesday nights, up to 30 customers could have dogs with them in an area that seats up to 190.

At least two patrons took offense to the presence of the dogs, however, and last week complained to the Stark County Health Department.

Because Gervasi is in the city and under the jurisdiction of the Canton Health Department, the county referred the complaints.

A city health inspector visited Gervasi, on 55th Street NE, on Friday. She didn't find any dogs, but told them that a state health regulation prohibits the presence of dogs in an outdoor dining area except for service dogs that aid people with disabilities, law enforcement patrol dogs and sentry dogs.

Mark Adams, the Canton Health Department director of environmental health, said in his 25 years working for the department he couldn't recall a prior complaint of an animal other than a service animal being in a restaurant.

"It's just something we have not seen ever," he said.

He said he's not aware of a situation where a disease outbreak resulted from a dog being in an outdoor dining area. But the law is the law.

Swaldo said that with the nearby Middle Branch Trail, where customers often took their dogs on walks, customers asked that their dogs be allowed to accompany them to meals out on the Piazza patio.

"People work a long day. They want to spend their evening in a beautiful outdoor experience, and they want to spend time with their companion and not leave their dog at home," said Swaldo, who owns two dogs. "People enjoy being around other dog owners. ... I think they like to socialize their dog. It's good for dogs to be around other dogs."

The Gervasi general manager said that when three customers complained about the dogs being there, he referred them to other areas of Gervasi where dogs were not permitted. He said the restaurant never had any issues with the animals.

Gervasi allowed the dogs only on Tuesdays under a set of rules. For example, the owner had to keep the dog on a leash and attend to the dog at all times. Owners had to clean up any dog droppings. The dogs could only be in the Piazza, the nearby lawn and brick path. Only well-behaved dogs were allowed. No female dogs in heat were permitted. Dogs had to be current on their shots.

It's not clear the reason that led to the Ohio Department of Health adopting the state regulation against animals in outdoor dining areas.

In Columbus, some customer complaints led to the Franklin County Public Health Department warning restaurant owners in the spring that allowing dogs on their patios violated the state's food safety code.

In response, state Rep. Laura Lanese, R-Grove City, who owns two dogs, introduced House Bill 263, which would allow dogs in outdoor dining areas.

She said several other states allow dogs to join their owners for a restaurant meal outside, and in her research she had found no health issues linked to the presence of the dogs.

"I think it's important that businesses have this option," Lanese said. "This gives (dog owners) an option to eat out more. To socialize more with their friends if they could bring their dogs with them."

Paris Township trustee seeks Ohio House seat

Posted Aug 14, 2017 at 7:04 PM

Paris Township Trustee Reggie Stoltzfus, a Republican, announced Monday that he is the first candidate to jump formally into the race to be state representative for the 50th Ohio House District seat.

If elected, Stoltzfus, 36, would succeed state Rep. Christina Hagan, R-Marlboro Township, who announced in April she would run to represent Ohio's 16th Congressional District. That district's current congressman, Jim Renacci, R-Wadsworth, launched his campaign for governor the prior month.

The 50th District includes Alliance, Hartville, Louisville, Lake Township, the northern part of Plain Township, the Stark County part of Minerva and other portions of eastern Stark County.

"I care deeply about our community, and I want to make sure it's in good hands. We've had a great representative the last six years with Christina Hagan," Stoltzfus said Monday. "First of all, I'm about families. I feel that families are the backbone of our society. But jobs are key especially in our area. Anything that's going to support families, I'm going to support as a legislator."

Stoltzfus said he's pro-life and pro-adoption and that he would like to see state tax credits for families adopting children to be expanded to make adoption easier and more affordable.

Business owner

Stoltzfus has been married to Jennette Stoltzfus for 15 years, and they have four children.

He is a 1999 Lake High School graduate who grew up in the Hartville area before living the past 10 years in Paris Township. He and his wife founded Dutchcraft Tress & Component in Paris Township about 13 years ago. He said 40 employees there make wood roof trusses with sales totaling about \$7 million a year. Stoltzfus said he also owns another business that makes kits for farmers to build barns.

"I know what it takes to create jobs," he said. "I know what it takes to kill jobs as well. Overtaxation and overregulation hurt jobs. I've been to the point where I said we're not going to hire any more employees because X, Y and Z taxes."

He said he would favor repealing the state's Commercial Activity Tax. He thinks it could be done without replacing it with another tax.

"I absolutely cannot stand that tax," Stoltzfus. "It's a pleasure of doing business in Ohio (tax), and it drives me nuts, and Ohio should be an inviting state and should want to do business. We tax people to do business just for doing business, and I think it's wrong. ... (If) you get rid of the CAT tax and taxes that are harmful to businesses, in the end, it will boost your economy. You will create more jobs and in turn will create more revenue for the state through sales taxes."

On his campaign website, Stoltzfus pledges in response to the opioid crisis to "push for Ohio to come down hard on drug dealers who are ultimately responsible for overdose deaths, and work to ensure heroin addicts can get the treatment they need in a timely fashion."

He said he would also seek expanding drug education for children as early as kindergarten along with expanding vocational training of graduating high school seniors.

Stoltzfus first became an elected official with his election as Paris Township trustee in 2015 and is serving his first term.

He said as trustee he helped obtain preliminary approval of a federal grant and low-interest loan to finance the purchase of a \$107,000 tractor for township mowing. He oversaw getting state grant funding to help cover the cost of signs for township roads.

Filing

On July 21, Stoltzfus filed his paperwork to run with at least 50 petition signatures with the Stark County Board of Elections, which has not yet checked the signatures' validity. The only other state representative candidate in Stark County who's also filed to run is Jackson Township Trustee Jamie Walters, a Republican, who wants to succeed State Rep. Kirk Schuring, R-Jackson Township, to represent the Ohio House 48th District. Schuring cannot seek re-election due to term limits.

The Paris Township trustee also has loaned his campaign \$30,000, according to his campaign finance filing with the Ohio Secretary of State, but he said he has not yet collected any contributions.

"At this point, I'm not asking for money," he said. "I'm funding myself at this point. ... I want to show people I'm committed in this race."

Stoltzfus said he has spoken with several prominent Republicans about his candidacy, but he declined to identify them. He said no one has yet endorsed him.

Stoltzfus said he would be able to juggle being a state representative and managing his business.

"I've got some great people working here for me," he said. "They can handle things while I'm away a few days a week."

Henson, Libby

From: Cho, Joy
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 9:24 AM
To: Westlake, Libby
Subject: RE: E-Clips for 8/16/2017
Attachments: E-Clips (8-16-17).docx

From: Westlake, Libby
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 8:54 AM
To: Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: E-Clips for 8/16/2017

HOUSE E-CLIPS 8/16/2017

AP Associated Press

NEW FACEBOOK DATA CENTER A BOOST TO OHIO'S TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Facebook will spend \$750 million on a new data center in central Ohio, the company announced Tuesday — marking another boost for the state's growing technology sector.

KASICH: OHIO 'PITCHING' TAIWANESE ELECTRONICS MAKER FOXCONN

Gov. John Kasich is acknowledging that Ohio is trying to attract a Foxconn facility.

The Columbus Dispatch
Ohio's Greatest Online Newspaper

KASICH: TRUMP DIMINISHING PRESIDENCY WITH REMARKS ON CHARLOTTEVILLE

Not only is President Donald Trump wrong to create a false moral equivalency between white supremacists and counter-protestors, he is diminishing the presidency itself, said Ohio Gov. John Kasich on a TV talk show today.

STAND-YOUR-GROUND GUN BILL MAKES COMEBACK AT STATEHOUSE

Stand-your-ground legislation is making a comeback at the Statehouse.

CORDRAY'S RUN FOR OHIO GOVERNOR AGAIN QUESTIONED BY GOP GOVERNORS GROUP

The Republican Governors Association is once again requesting information to learn if consumer watchdog Richard Cordray is mulling a run for Ohio governor even as he serves as the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

KASICH SAYS PLAN FOR FACEBOOK DATA CENTER A NOD TO STATE'S TECH-READY WORKFORCE

Facebook on Tuesday became the latest tech giant to announce a big investment in central Ohio, but it won't be the last if development officials and Gov. John Kasich get their way.

KASICH CONFIRMS OHIO IS ON THE HUNT FOR FOXCONN PLANT

The state has officially acknowledged for the first time that it is trying to land an investment from Asian electronics company Foxconn.

THE PLAIN DEALER

FACEBOOK TO BUILD \$750 MILLION DATA CENTER IN NEW ALBANY

Facebook will build a \$750 million data center in the tony northeast Columbus suburb.

OHIO SENATE TO MEET TUESDAY TO VOTE TO OVERRIDE KASICH'S BUDGET VETOES

The Ohio Senate will meet next Tuesday to attempt to override some of Gov. John Kasich's vetoes on the two-year budget adopted last month, a Senate GOP spokesman said.

CINCINNATI-AREA KILLER SET TO BE EXECUTED IN OCTOBER LOSES APPEAL

A Cincinnati-area man set for execution in October lost a challenge to his case Tuesday, clearing another hurdle as the state of Ohio seeks to ensure the execution happens on schedule.

FIXING OHIO'S GERRYMANDERING PROBLEM - OUT OF LINE: IMPACT 2017 AND BEYOND

For the folks on East Ridgewood Drive on the eastern edge of Parma outside Cleveland, their local representative in Congress, Marcy Kaptur, lives five counties away on the west side of Toledo.

FACEBOOK 'LIKES' OHIO FOR NEW \$750M DATA CENTER: OHIO POLITICS ROUNDUP

Ohio Gov. John Kasich is on hand as Facebook announces a new data center in the state. Could Foxconn be next? Cleveland Councilman Jeff Johnson urges city leaders to hurry up so the Quicken Loans Arena upgrade referendum can be held this November.

THE ENQUIRER

STATE SENATOR: INVESTIGATE DETERS, JUSTICE DEWINE

State Sen. Cecil Thomas is calling for an independent investigation of Supreme Court Justice Pat DeWine and Hamilton County Chief Prosecutor Joe Deters.

SUIT: NEARLY 300M DOSES OF OPIOIDS FLOODED GREATER CINCINNATI OVER FIVE YEARS

Cincinnati sued three major drug distributors Tuesday and accused them of shipping excess millions of doses to the region over the years and resisting efforts to hold them accountable.

THE BLADE

One of America's Great Newspapers

CORDRAY QUESTION LOOMS OVER OHIO DEMS GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY

Despite efforts by the Ohio Democratic Party to move into 2018 campaign mode, a large question mark hovers over the gubernatorial race in the form of Richard Cordray.

HOUSE CLIPS



8/16/17

New Facebook data center a boost to Ohio's technology sector

Today

NEW ALBANY, Ohio (AP) — Facebook will spend \$750 million on a new data center in central Ohio, the company announced Tuesday — marking another boost for the state's growing technology sector.

The world's biggest social media company joined Republican Gov. John Kasich and a host of other dignitaries to announce its 10th data center will be in New Albany, just northeast of Columbus.

The 22-acre (8.9-hectare) data center will be powered exclusively with renewable energy. It is expected to employ 100 people to start and to begin providing services in 2019.

Rachel Peterson, the company's director of data center strategy and development, said several factors attracted Facebook to the location, including fiber and power infrastructure, government support, livability and the availability of high-tech talent.

"We look at that community fit and how we're going to live and work in a community," she said. "We not only live there. We work there, too. We hire there locally. So we want to make sure there's a strong fit."

She said the availability of renewable energy sources, including wind, solar and hydro, was critical to the decision — a factor underlined by Kasich, who has pushed back against legislative efforts to turn back the state's alternative energy requirements.

"It is critical that we continue developing the renewables, because, believe me, at the end of the day, if the Facebooks and the Googles and the PayPals and the Amazons think that we are not committed to renewable energy, they will not come here. Period, end of story," he said.

Menlo Park, California-based Facebook has been adding data centers in the U.S. and internationally to handle the growing number of photos, videos and additional digital content it must process from its 2 billion users. The Ohio project was code-named Sidecat as it moved through the successful application process for \$37 million in state tax incentives.

U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi, whose district will house the facility, said it's "incredibly important."

"It continues to show not just the Silicon Valley, but job creators all over the country, that, hey, you know what, something must be happening in Ohio," the Republican congressman said, noting the hope that a synergy is beginning to build.

Amazon opened three cloud-computing data center sites in central Ohio last year. The company invested about \$1 billion in centers in New Albany and two other Columbus suburbs, Dublin and Hilliard.

Kasich said Tuesday's announcement shows Ohio is diversifying its economy beyond its heavy reliance on manufacturing. He hopes the growing number of tech jobs entice younger workers to move to or remain in Ohio, whose population growth has stagnated as average ages rise.

"Ohio has it all," Kasich said. "You've got the cool factor. You've got exciting companies. You've got the lower cost of living."

He noted other recent technology investments in the state, including by Explorys, IBM Analytics and Teradata. Cologix, a Denver-based data company, also plans a \$130 million data center on its Columbus campus.

Kasich: Ohio 'pitching' Taiwanese electronics maker Foxconn

Today

NEW ALBANY, Ohio (AP) — Gov. John Kasich (KAY'-sik) is acknowledging that Ohio is trying to attract a Foxconn facility.

In his first public remarks on the matter, the Republican governor said Tuesday that Ohio is "pitching" the Taiwanese electronics manufacturer.

Foxconn CEO Terry Gou has named Ohio as a possible site for investment. Kasich told dignitaries gathered Tuesday to welcome a Facebook data center to central Ohio that his June trip to Japan involved a meeting with Gou.

Foxconn has pledged to invest \$10 billion in a massive display panel factory in Wisconsin. State lawmakers there are pursuing a \$3 billion tax-incentive package.

Kasich couldn't predict whether Ohio's efforts will succeed. He said Ohio officials "don't buy deals" and he won't obligate the state to an investment deal that takes 40 years to repay.

Kasich: Trump diminishing presidency with remarks on Charlottesville

Posted at 7:54 AM, Updated at 7:54 AM

Not only is President Donald Trump wrong to create a false moral equivalency between white supremacists and counter-protestors, he is diminishing the presidency itself, said Ohio Gov. John Kasich on a TV talk show today.

"There is a bitterness setting in that may not be able to be removed," Kasich said on NBC's Today Show.

"President Trump needs to listen to the people before he takes this presidency in a place that is not acceptable to our country."

Kasich, speaking from a park near his Westerville home, said for Trump to declare there were "fine people" on both sides and claim both sides bore responsibility of the violent confrontation over the weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia, "reduces the ability to totally condemn these hate crimes."

Listen to the latest Buckeye Forum politics podcast

"Think about what you have seen, as one of the (NBC) reporters said, reminiscent of what we saw in Germany in the 1930s. The president has to totally condemn this," Kasich said.

"There is no moral equivalency between the KKK, the neo-Nazi's and anybody else."

Stand-your-ground gun bill makes comeback at Statehouse

Posted at 12:01 AM, Updated at 5:42 AM

Stand-your-ground legislation is making a comeback at the Statehouse.

The proposal would allow gun owners to use deadly force against would-be assailants in self-defense and eliminate the duty under current law to retreat before using force.

"We want to eliminate your duty to retreat when you are under threat of violent attack," said Sen. Jay Hottinger, R-Newark, a co-sponsor of Senate Bill 180, which was introduced Tuesday. "It's difficult to defend yourself when you are running away or your back is turned."

Pending companion House and Senate bills also would expand the so-called Castle Doctrine, which allows people to act in self-defense, without retreating, when in their homes, cars or relatives' cars. Under the new legislation, that would be changed to allow people to act in self-defense without retreating when also anywhere a person has a legal right to be, such as on a sidewalk or in a parking lot.

The bills also would shift the burden to prosecutors in self-defense cases to prove that criminal defendants did not act to defend themselves, others or their homes. Hottinger said Ohio is the only state in which people must prove they acted in self-defense in using deadly force.

Listen to the Buckeye Forum podcast

The Republican-controlled House passed a wide-ranging, pro-gun bill in late 2013 that included stand-your-ground language, but the Senate removed the provision amid objections from prosecutors and police.

The Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association and the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio have not changed their positions.

"We think a person who has a safe way of avoiding a confrontation should take advantage of that rather than just stand there and blast away," said John Murphy, executive director of the prosecutors group.

Murphy also said it is reasonable to require a defendant to prove a self-defense claim by a preponderance of evidence — a lesser standard than beyond reasonable doubt. Current laws have worked well with no evidence that prosecutors are improperly pursuing charges against people who properly act in self-defense.

Michael Weinman, governmental affairs director for the FOP, said the organization continues to oppose stand-your-ground legislation.

"Even officers have a duty to de-escalate the situation before it gets to the point of using deadly force," he said.

Jim Irvine, president of the Buckeye Firearms Association, said that group supports the proposed changes.

"If someone is attacking you and you are forced to defend your life, you are better off to stand your ground or advance on the other person than you are to retreat," he said.

"We know now that it's wrong to put burdens on a crime victim. We should be helping the victim and putting the penalties on the criminal. A lot of states did this a decade ago."

The group also believes that the prosecution should bear the responsibility of proving a person did not act in self-defense in using deadly force, Irvine said.

The legislation, which includes House Bill 228 with 36 co-sponsors, also would reduce penalties for concealed-carry offenses to minor misdemeanors, carrying only fines if the offender does not commit another offense while carrying a gun.

The House bill also would eliminate the mandatory posting of no-guns-allowed signs at public and private K-12 schools, airports, police stations, courthouses, jails, prisons, child-care centers and other facilities.

Cordray's run for Ohio governor again questioned by GOP governors group

Posted Aug 15, 2017 at 11:03 AM, Updated Aug 15, 2017 at 11:51 AM

The Republican Governors Association is once again requesting information to learn if consumer watchdog Richard Cordray is mulling a run for Ohio governor even as he serves as the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The organization announced today that it has sent the CFPB a second Freedom of Information Act request for records that it believes would indicate that Cordray is actively pursuing a run. Doing so would potentially violate the Hatch Act, a law that bars some in the executive branch from participating in political activity while serving.

The public records request seeks information including correspondence between Cordray and prominent Democratic operatives in the state and copies of Cordray's schedule and government-issued cell and office phone records since June 1.

This is the second public records request the organization has made in the last two weeks. Earlier in August, the group requested Cordray turn over all e-mails between his office and a wide variety of people in Ohio, including former Ohio Democratic Chairman David Leland, Democratic fundraiser Melissa Barnhart, (Cleveland) Plain Dealer political columnist Brent Larkin and GateHouse Media, owners of The Dispatch, The (Canton) Repository and other Ohio newspapers.

The group said they put out the second request after WVXU reported that Cordray discussed the Ohio governor's race with the chair of the Hamilton County Democratic party.

"Ohioans deserve to know whether Richard Cordray is using his Consumer Financial Protection Bureau office for political gain at the expense of taxpayers," said RGA Communications Director Jon Thompson. "If these new revelations are correct, and Cordray did discuss potential gubernatorial debates with Ohio

Democrats, he should admit truthfully what he discussed, if he is engaged in prohibited political activity, and why he is so focused on not doing his job.”

Four Democrats are currently seeking the Democratic nomination in the 2018 race: former state Rep. Connie Pillich, state Sen. Joe Schiavoni, former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton and Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley.

Kasich says plan for Facebook data center a nod to state's tech-ready workforce

Posted Aug 15, 2017 at 10:27 AM, Updated Aug 15, 2017 at 1:25 PM

Facebook on Tuesday became the latest tech giant to announce a big investment in central Ohio, but it won't be the last if development officials and Gov. John Kasich get their way.

Kasich and others heralded Facebook's announcement of a \$750 million data center in New Albany as one more significant step in attracting tech jobs to Ohio.

Facebook unveiled renderings of a 970,000-square-foot data center divided into two large buildings on 345 acres just inside Licking County in New Albany, along Beech Road south of State Route 161.

The first phase is slated for completion in 2019, with the second phase to be opened in 2020. The company expects to have 100 permanent employees there, in addition to creating about 1,000 construction jobs during the building phase.

“One of our goals has been ... to diversify the state,” Kasich said at the press conference at New Albany City Hall to officially announce the project. “Ohio has had a heavy reliance on manufacturing,” he said, after thanking Facebook for recognizing that Ohio has the workforce to support high-tech jobs.

John Minor, CEO of JobsOhio, the state's privatized development organization, said that excluding “capital intensive” shale and gas projects, Facebook's investment is the second-largest - behind Amazon - that the state has attracted since JobsOhio's creation in 2011.

Facebook officially announced its plans Tuesday morning to build a data center in the New Albany International Business Park.

The company will invest \$750 million on its 970,000-square-foot facility that it said will be powered completely by renewable energy.

The center will be located on 345 acres on a site east of Beech Road and south of State Route 161.

Facebook said the New Albany center, which will be the company's 10th, is expected to begin delivering services in 2019.

"We're thrilled to have found a home in Ohio and to embark on this exciting partnership," said Erin Egan, Facebook's vice president of U.S. public policy, in a statement. "Everything here has been as advertised — from a committed set of community partners and strong pool of talent to the opportunity to power our facility with 100 percent renewable energy. The Buckeye State is a great place to do business."

After completion, Facebook said it expects to employ approximately 100 workers at its New Albany data center.

Kasich confirms Ohio is on the hunt for Foxconn plant

Posted Aug 15, 2017 at 1:33 PM, Updated Aug 15, 2017 at 4:35 PM

The state has officially acknowledged for the first time that it is trying to land an investment from Asian electronics company Foxconn.

"We are pitching Foxconn. We hope they will make something here," Gov. John Kasich said Tuesday in New Albany where Facebook was announcing its plans for a \$750 million data center.

Foxconn, which makes Apple's iPhone and other products for electronics companies, said in July that Ohio was one of several states that the company was considering for its first U.S. investment. Ohio economic-development and political officials have declined to comment about any negotiations with the company, nor would they confirm that talks are taking place.

Last month, Foxconn said it will spend \$10 billion to build a massive plant in Wisconsin to make LCD screens for electronic goods. The plant will have 3,000 jobs to start, with the potential to grow as many as 13,000 jobs in the years ahead.

The company has said it is the first of multiple investments planned over several states. Sources have told The Dispatch that central Ohio remains in the running for a Foxconn plant despite the Wisconsin announcement.

"We don't know if they'll make something here," Kasich said.

The hope is that if they don't, they'll bring something else of value to Ohio, he said, without elaborating on what that might be.

Kasich also promised that it wouldn't take 40 years to make back the state's investment in any Foxconn transaction, should the company decide to locate in Ohio.

The Wisconsin legislature is debating a proposal that would give Foxconn \$3 billion in incentives in return for its investment. A state fiscal analysis has said it will take at least 25 years to break even on that investment.

Even with Kasich's comments, JobOhio, the governor's nonprofit, private economic development company, still refused to comment on whether it has been in talks with Foxconn about an investment in the state.

THE PLAIN DEALER

Facebook to build \$750 million data center in New Albany

Updated on August 16, 2017 at 6:51 AM, Posted on August 15, 2017 at 12:45 PM

NEW ALBANY, Ohio - Facebook will build a \$750 million data center in the tony northeast Columbus suburb.

At an announcement Tuesday, the social media giant said it will house thousands of servers enabling users to post photos, videos, 360-degree photos and even virtual reality content.

Some 2 billion people use Facebook, a Menlo Park, California-based company that also owns Instagram and What'sApp.

Rachel Peterson, Facebook's director of data center strategy and development, said the central Ohio facility will help enable parents to show pictures of a new baby or teens to share high school graduation photos.

"We're bringing the world closer together," she said.

Peterson expects to employ about 100 workers at the data center. The company declined to discuss wages but Peterson said they will be high quality and sought-after tech positions.

The facility will be built in two phases, each about 450,000 square feet - plus an administration building that will put the site at just under 1 million square feet in all. The first phase is expected to be completed in 2019 and the second in 2020, Peterson said.

Peterson said it took the company about three years to decide on its New Albany site.

The company considered local talent, she said. Also important to Facebook was a strong fit with the state and community, she said.

Facebook has a 30-year property tax break on its land, 345 acres on Ohio 161, New Albany Mayor Sloan Spalding said. From the state, Facebook scored a 2-percent, 10-year Job Creation Tax Credit and a 100-percent and a 15-year data center sales tax exemption.

The company is working with AEP to build a substation on site, using all-renewable energy to power the facility. Instead of using air conditioning to cool the servers, which has been a traditional practice in data centers, Peterson said Facebook will use outdoor air.

At the announcement, Gov. John Kasich touted Facebook as the latest attempt by Ohio to diversify.

"Ohio, as we know, has as a heavy reliance on manufacturing and we're for that," the Republican said. "But we also believe that manufacturing in and of itself doesn't get the job done."

Kasich also touted JobsOhio, his private nonprofit that works to diversify and expand the state's economy. It oversaw the process of currying favor with the social media company, said John Minor, the organization's president.

Kasich ticked off a number of companies that have expanded in Ohio during his time in office - IBM Analytics, Teredata and others.

"This is another step in terms of growing the tech sector in central Ohio," Minor said.

Ohio Senate to meet Tuesday to vote to override Kasich's budget vetoes

Updated on August 15, 2017 at 4:46 PM, Posted on August 15, 2017 at 3:19 PM

COLUMBUS, Ohio - The Ohio Senate will meet next Tuesday to attempt to override some of Gov. John Kasich's vetoes on the two-year budget adopted last month, a Senate GOP spokesman said.

Senate President Larry Obhof has told senators in recent weeks that he intended to schedule a session for veto overrides, said spokesman John Fortney.

"Our members still need to meet and have a thorough discussion regarding which of the vetoes of the House we need to take up," Fortney said. "I would expect a handful of those on Tuesday."

Kasich, a Republican, has been at odds with the GOP supermajority in the General Assembly over Medicaid expansion, with the governor arguing the state needs the program and many lawmakers wanting to dismantle the program.

On June 30, Kasich vetoed 47 line items in the \$133 million, two-year budget, which went into effect July 1.

Five days later, the Ohio House met and overrode 11 of those vetoes. A Medicaid expansion enrollment freeze that Kasich had vetoed never came up for vote.

Kasich, nevertheless, said many of the House's vetoes could weaken the state's Medicaid program. His budget director said lawmakers didn't properly fund Medicaid in the 2018-2019 budget and the Medicaid-related veto overrides worsen the situation.

The Senate can only override vetoes the House has already voted to override.

Veto overrides need the approval of three-fifths of each chamber. In the 30-member Senate, that means 20 votes.

Janetta King, president of progressive think tank Innovation Ohio, said no legislature has overridden a governor's budget vetoes in about 40 years.

"This is very telling of a toxic environment between the current legislature and the governor," she said.

Democrats do not yet know how they will vote on the veto overrides since they do not know which vetoes the GOP leadership wants to take on, said Mike Rowe, spokesman for the minority party in the Senate.

"As soon as we know what the list is going to be we are going to be talking as a caucus to figure out what we're going to do," he said.

Senators could look at the proposed Healthy Ohio program, which before Kasich's veto would have required Medicaid recipients make payments into health savings accounts or lose coverage, akin to paying a health insurance premium.

Greg Lawson, a research fellow with the Buckeye Institute, a conservative think tank, believes the Senate could have the votes to override the Healthy Ohio veto. King, of Innovation Ohio, hopes that's not the case, noting the federal government has rejected the proposal in the past.

King also hopes senators nix a governor's veto for additional funding to replace lost revenue from a sales tax on Medicaid managed care organizations.

"This really, unfortunately, is the track record of the Kasich administration, where he has left local communities really holding the bag through a lot of different types of cuts he has passed down to them," she said.

Cleveland.com reached out to the Kasich administration about the scheduled veto override session but never heard back.

Lawson, who opposes Medicaid expansion, hopes lawmakers override a veto and put limitations on the Ohio Controlling Board, a legislative and budget panel that oversees state spending. Kasich was able to expand Medicaid using the Controlling Board. Lawson doesn't believe a handful of people should enlist Ohio in large federal programs with complicated regulations without a vote of the full Legislature, and hopes lawmakers can override Kasich's veto. He said many senators feel the same.

"There's been some controversy because that's for example how Medicaid expansion transpired," he said.

Cincinnati-area killer set to be executed in October loses appeal

Posted on August 15, 2017 at 3:40 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- A Cincinnati-area man set for execution in October lost a challenge to his case Tuesday, clearing another hurdle as the state of Ohio seeks to ensure the execution happens on schedule.

A panel from the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 that Raymond Tibbetts's petition to challenge his convictions was barred because it is considered "second or successive." Such petitions are not allowed except under limited circumstances, and the panel's majority ruled that Tibbetts did not overcome that threshold.

Tibbetts, 60, was convicted for fatally stabbing Fred Hicks and bludgeoning Judith Sue Crawford to death in 1997. Hicks was found at home, still connected to an oxygen tank, with two knives sticking

out of his chest and a knife in his back. Crawford, his caretaker, was found upstairs with a cracked skull.

Police matched DNA from blood stains in Tibbetts' car and on his clothes to the victims. A judge sentenced him to die in 1998.

Tibbetts said a federal judge should review his new petition because Ohio's method of executing death-row inmates through lethal injection violates is constitutional. He argues that while he brought this up in his first petition in 2003, the issue should be reviewed again because the state now use a new three-drug cocktail for lethal injections.

The majority rejected this argument, ruling that the proper venue to challenge an execution protocol is through a lawsuit and that the general constitutionality of lethal injections was properly reviewed when courts ruled on Tibbetts' first petition.

Tibbetts also argued that his personal characteristics, such as his history of alcohol and drug abuse and childhood trauma would leave him at risk for unconstitutional harm if he was to be executed now.

The court disagreed.

Judge Karen Nelson Moore, a Bill Clinton appointee, wrote in a dissent that she feels Tibbetts has made a reasonable claim that he will suffer substantial harm because of his personal characteristics should he be executed. She wrote that a judge should decide whether Tibbetts' new petition has merit, as any claims on whether a person is physically and mentally fit to be executed cannot be addressed until an execution date is near.

Otte is scheduled to be the third person executed this year, after the 6th Circuit wiped away a legal hurdle the state faced in using its lethal injection method.

The state resumed executions in July, after placing them on hold for more than three years. The hold was because Dennis McGuire took an unusually long 26 minutes to die with a two-drug combo including midazolam during his January 2014 execution. The sedative has been involved in problematic executions in other states.

Otte, as well as fellow inmates Ronald Phillips and Raymond Tibbetts sued to prevent the state from using a new three-drug combination that includes midazolam. The 6th Circuit ruled in June that the

inmates did not show that they would almost certainly be caused excruciating pain if midazolam was used.

The state executed Phillips, a killer from Akron, on July 26. There were no complications.

Fixing Ohio's gerrymandering problem – Out of Line: Impact 2017 and Beyond

Posted August 16, 2017 at 05:30 AM, Updated August 16, 2017 at 07:08 AM

LEVELAND, Ohio – For the folks on East Ridgewood Drive on the eastern edge of Parma outside Cleveland, their local representative in Congress, Marcy Kaptur, lives five counties away on the west side of Toledo.

The fastest route – a 116-mile, two-hour drive mostly on the Ohio Turnpike – means leaving Kaptur's 9th district and driving through areas represented by congressmen Jim Renacci (16th), Bob Gibbs (7th), Jim Jordan (4th) and Bob Latta (5th) before returning to Kaptur's district for the final leg of the trip.

How representative is that?

Welcome to gerrymandering – the act of politicians drawing congressional district lines to benefit themselves or their parties rather than the citizens of a state.

Gerrymandering not only shapes districts in odd ways, dividing communities and ignoring local concerns, it severely limits the odds of a dissatisfied electorate from flipping control of Congress from one party to the other at election time.

Congress is not held as accountable as it could be.

It doesn't have to be this way.

Today, cleveland.com launches Out of Line: Impact 2017 and Beyond, a series that will search for a better way – highlighting over the next several months how some other states and countries block, or diminish, the role of politicians from the process of mapping political districts.

The idea is to find a system that puts ordinary people first – not the elected officials and lobbyists – and to advocate for the best ideas to be incorporated in Ohio.

A petition drive is under way that could lead to a public vote next year on making changes to Ohio's map-drawing process. But we will also examine whether what advocates propose as an amendment to the Ohio Constitution goes far enough.

This is the first installment in the series. Scroll below for a background on what is wrong with the current system. On Thursday we will explain how we've gotten here and why the impact of gerrymandering has become worse than perhaps ever before.

What's wrong: Reason 1 - Who do you call?

Kaptur's long and meandering congressional district is just one example of congressional districts that make no geographic sense.

For instance, people in Sheffield, Elyria and Amherst are among those represented by Jim Jordan. Jordan's district begins in Lorain County, just west Cleveland, stretches more than 100 miles south to suburban Columbus and then west to within about 12 miles of the Indiana border.

Cities, counties and regions are split largely for political reasons – most recently to create as many Republican “safe” seats as possible. (Democrats could do the same if they were to take control of the Ohio House, Ohio Senate and governor's office by the next map-drawing time after the 2020 census.)

Often sacrificed in the process are districts that group together communities that have historical ties or populations with similar characteristics and concerns.

Fragmented Greater Cleveland/Akron

A case in point: the seven-county Greater Cleveland-Akron area.

Ohio's 16 congressional districts have roughly 700,000 residents in each. That means the Greater Cleveland/Akron area is large enough to have four nearly self-contained districts – with representatives focused on the Cleveland-Akron area.

Instead, only one district – Marcia Fudge's 11th – is fully in the region. Even Fudge's district is shaped oddly, covering much of eastern Cuyahoga County before following a narrow stretch south to include portions of Akron.

Six other districts slice through Greater Cleveland and out to less urban areas with little in common to Greater Cleveland.

People in the Lorain County suburb of Avon have the same representative – Bob Gibbs – as people 60 miles west in Willard, 90 miles south in Coshocton and 100 miles southeast in New Philadelphia.

What's wrong: Reason 2 - No accountability at the ballot box

Ohio's 16 congressional districts, specifically drawn to create 12 Republican seats and four Democratic seats – provide very little opportunity for general election voters in any one district to hold their representative accountable.

This goes for Republicans, Democrats and independents.

The outcomes of elections are arguably determined at map-drawing time rather than at the ballot box. The mapping process takes place after each census – and in Ohio with approval of the Ohio House, Ohio Senate and governor, which at the moment are all in Republican hands.

The average margin between Democrats and Republicans in Ohio's 16 congressional races last year was 36.3 percentage points. In examining the results over decades, cleveland.com removed votes for third-party and independent candidates in order to allow for a cleaner look at the trends.

The maps are working as planned

Here's evidence that the safe-seat drawing method worked as envisioned by the politicians that drew them.

In 2016, the average margin between Democrats and Republicans in Ohio's 16 congressional races was 36.3 percentage points, and the closest race wasn't close at all – decided by 18.4 points – cleveland.com found in an analysis published earlier.

Cleveland.com, in analyzing election results covering the last 448 races going back to 1972, could not find a time when there was less competition between the two parties, though the 1980s were nearly as uncompetitive.

Since the current maps were drawn six years ago, none of the 16 seats has changed party hands.

Party-control of this process was split among Republicans and Democrats in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, but since then has been controlled entirely by the Republicans.

What's wrong: Reason 3 - Congressional party control not representative

Over the last two map-drawing cycles – 2002-2010 and 2012-2020 – Ohio's congressional delegation has become less reflective of the political leanings of Ohio's electorate.

Republicans won 51 percent of the head-to-head vote against Democrats in the congressional elections statewide from 2002 through 2010, but won 62 percent of the seats.

Since 2012, when the latest maps were first used, Republicans have won 56 percent of the vote and 75 percent of the seats – the same 12 seats in each of the three elections.

If districts more reflective of Ohio's political leanings were used for the 2016 election, Republicans would have held a 10-6 or 11-5 edge over Democrats, rather than the 12-4 advantage, a recent analysis by the Associated Press concluded.

Alternatives

In most states, including Ohio, lawmakers have primary control over drawing district lines, according to research published by Justin Levitt, associate dean for research at the Loyola of Los Angeles law school.

But Arizona, California, Idaho and Washington use independent commissions to keep their legislatures out of the process. They go to great lengths in some cases to exclude politicians, their staff, lobbyists and even future politicians (banning commission members from running for office for at least a few years).

In an interview with cleveland.com, Levitt said the special mapping commissions are "designed to take politicians' self-interest out of the system."

The results of elections in these states have proven to be more reflective of the partisan leanings of their populations than in most states where politicians are involved in mapping district lines.

Arizona test

Excluding the legislature was confirmed as a legal option in 2015 when the Supreme Court delivered a key ruling.

At issue was the constitutionality of Arizona's use of an independent commission of non-elected officials, as established by a voter initiative. The court, in a 5-4 decision, ruled it is constitutional.

"The people of Arizona turned to the initiative to curb the practice of gerrymandering," Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote, "and, thereby, to ensure that Members of Congress would have 'an habitual recollection of their dependence on the people.' "

Next - Gerrymandering not new, just becoming worse

The term gerrymandering dates back to 1812 and the act of drawing districts for political gain is even older.

The abuse of gerrymandering has grown worse over the last several years, enabled in part by a series of law changes, court decisions and one-sided elections - plus the introduction of sophisticated computer mapping programs that make it easier than ever to manipulate the process.

On Thursday, cleveland.com will detail milestones along the way that led to what we have today.

Facebook 'likes' Ohio for new \$750M data center: Ohio Politics Roundup

Posted on August 16, 2017 at 6:20 AM

Ohio Gov. John Kasich is on hand as Facebook announces a new data center in the state. Could Foxconn be next? Cleveland Councilman Jeff Johnson urges city leaders to hurry up so the Quicken Loans Arena upgrade referendum can be held this November. And Ohio politicians on both sides of the aisle criticize Donald Trump for blaming "both sides" for last Saturday's violence in Charlottesville. Today's roundup is brought to you by Jeremy Pelzer.

Facebook friends: Ohio Gov. John Kasich and other state officials were in New Albany on Tuesday for Facebook's announcement that it will build a \$750 million data center in the Columbus suburb. As cleveland.com's Laura Hancock reports, Facebook scored state and local tax credits and exemptions to win the data center, which will employ about 100 people when it's finished in 2020.

What does the Foxconn say? Kasich also confirmed that the state is trying to land an investment from Asian electronics company Foxconn, according to the Columbus Dispatch's Mark Williams. The governor didn't say what Foxconn might do in Ohio, though he promised that it wouldn't take 40 years to make back any state incentives offered to the company - a reference to a controversial \$3 billion incentive package offered by Wisconsin for Foxconn to build a \$10 billion plant there.

See you in September? Cleveland Councilman Jeff Johnson is calling on city leaders to set a council meeting before Sept. 6 so the Quicken Loans Arena upgrade referendum can be voted on in the November election, writes cleveland.com's Andrew J. Tobias. Under city election rules, assuming voter petitions are certified, the council must schedule the referendum for a vote by Sept. 6 - 60 days before the Nov. 7 election - for it to appear on the general election ballot.

Johnson's interest in this: Johnson, who's running for mayor, said he wants the referendum to be held in November so more people can weigh in and so the city can avoid the \$763,000 cost of holding a special election. But as Tobias notes, activists against the arena deal also "hope that placing the issue on the November ballot will give them another issue to organize around in the mayor's race."

Here's where things get weird: City workers have until Monday to finish certifying the petitions. The next council meeting after then is scheduled for Sept. 18. However, the city charter says council can only act to place a referendum on the ballot during a "regularly scheduled meeting." Council President Kevin Kelley has said he suspects that moving up the existing Sept. 18 meeting or scheduling a new one to meet the Sept. 6 deadline would no longer constitute a "regularly scheduled meeting." Stay tuned.

Early voting starts in Cleveland: Tuesday was the first day of early voting for Cleveland's mayoral race, and as cleveland.com's Robert Higgs found, traffic was sparse throughout the morning. However, about 1,200 absentee ballot requests were received Monday - more than half the roughly 2,000 requests officials had received up until that point.

Trump's remarks win bipartisan scorn: President Donald Trump drew criticism from Ohio politicians on both sides of the aisle Tuesday after stating that protesters "on both sides" were responsible for last weekend's violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. Cleveland.com's Steve Koff has a rundown of many of the statements from Democrats like U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown and U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, as well as Kasich, a longtime Trump critic. Other Ohio Republicans weighed in (though not by name) against Trump as well, including U.S. Sen. Rob Portman and U.S. Reps. Pat Tiberi and Steve Stivers, the latter of whom chairs the House GOP's campaign arm.

Most of the Democratic candidates for Ohio governor also tweeted their disapproval - including Betty Sutton, who called out the four GOP gubernatorial candidates for remaining silent on Trump's remarks (as of Tuesday evening, at least).

Cincy sues drug companies: Cincinnati on Tuesday joined the list of Ohio cities to file suit against drug companies over the opioid epidemic. As the Cincinnati Enquirer's Anne Saker reports, the suit accuses three major drug distributors - including Columbus-based Cardinal Health - of shipping millions of doses of opioids to the Cincinnati area, illegally creating a public nuisance and violating the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as RICO. The suit seeks unspecified damages that could run into the millions of dollars.

Stivers draws another Dem opponent: Rick Neal, a former international aid worker from Columbus, announced plans to challenge Stivers in Ohio's 15th Congressional District, according to the Dispatch's Jessica Wehrman. Two others have already filed to challenge Stivers in the heavily GOP district: Democrat Brian Hupp and unaffiliated candidate David Lynch.

Connection issues: In our latest "Ohio Matters" report, I take a look at problems Vinton County residents face in getting high-speed Internet access. As I found, it's an issue that touches on some of the most important issues facing the country today, from job creation to the opioid epidemic.

Speaking of broadband: "Sen. Rob Portman and three other senators are asking the Government Accountability Office to share information from an investigation into a program that is supposed to provide low-income households with discounts on telephone and broadband service," Wehrman reports. The GAO report, released in May, concluded that the program's "large and diffuse" administrative structure made it susceptible to "significant" risk of fraud, waste and abuse.

Overriding interest: "The Ohio Senate will meet next Tuesday to attempt to override some of Gov. John Kasich's vetoes on the two-year budget adopted last month," Hancock writes. Last month, the Ohio House overrode 11 of Kasich's budget vetoes, mostly related to Medicaid - Senate Republicans have yet to decide which of those they'll be voting on next week.

Fish story: In the wake of a newly released Army Corps of Engineers study on how to keep invasive Asian carp out of the Great Lakes, cleveland.com's Sabrina Eaton takes a closer look at which Ohio streams the fish might use to reach Lake Erie, as well as what's being done to stop them.

RGA goes fishing again: The Republican Governors Association has filed another public records request with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for any documents indicating that bureau director Richard Cordray is pursuing a run for governor in violation of the Hatch Act, according to Wehrman. The RGA filed the second request after a WVXU report that Cordray discussed the governor's race with Hamilton County Democratic Chair Tim Burke.

Back down South: Democratic U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan was in Alabama last Saturday to speak at a rally for Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Doug Jones, a former U.S. attorney, according to AL.com's Paul Gattis. It's not the first time Ryan has campaigned this summer for a southern Democrat: in June, he was in South Carolina stumping for Archie Parnell, who unsuccessfully ran in a special election for Trump budget director Mick Mulvaney's former congressional seat.

Brown weighs in on NAFTA talks: Democratic U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, in an op-ed in Tuesday's USA Today, offered his two cents on the first round of NAFTA renegotiation talks, which start Wednesday. Among other points, Brown called for "strong anti-outsourcing provisions up front, before we even sit down at the negotiating table," and stated "Any new deal must include stronger enforcement tools to hold countries accountable if they break the rules."

Toledo, robot capital of the nation: A new report from the Brookings Institution finds that Toledo had 9 industrial robots for every 1,000 workers in 2015 -- the highest robot-to-worker ratio of any workforce in the nation's 100 largest metro areas. The Youngstown-Warren-Boardman metro area placed sixth, with 4.5 robots per 1,000 workers. As the report states, "This clustering follows logically from the fact that the auto industry--highly concentrated in the Midwest and upper South--currently employs nearly half of all industrial robots in use."

So what does this have to do with politics? States (such as Ohio) that voted Trump last November had, on average, twice as many robots as states won by Hillary Clinton. "This is not to say robots determined the outcome of the 2016 election," the Brookings report concludes. But "robots appear to be playing a special role in the specific unease of at least one region" - the industrial Midwest.

THE ENQUIRER

State senator: Investigate Deters, Justice DeWine

Published 11:06 p.m. ET Aug. 15, 2017

CINCINNATI - State Sen. Cecil Thomas is calling for an independent investigation of Supreme Court Justice Pat DeWine and Hamilton County Chief Prosecutor Joe Deters.

Thomas' office alleges DeWine, in collusion with Deters, possibly secured a public contract for his son, Matt DeWine.

Thomas is calling for the investigation to determine if there are any violations of the Ohio Revised Code for having an unlawful interest in a public contract.

There will be a news conference at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday on the steps of the courthouse.

Watch for updates on this story.

Enquirer media partner Fox 19 contributed to this report

Suit: Nearly 300M doses of opioids flooded Greater Cincinnati over five years

Published 1:00 p.m. ET Aug. 15, 2017 | Updated 3:32 p.m. ET Aug. 15, 2017

Cincinnati sued three major drug distributors Tuesday and accused them of shipping excess millions of doses to the region over the years and resisting efforts to hold them accountable. The move follows the action of Clermont County and at least three other major Ohio cities going to federal court to fight the opioid epidemic,

The city is seeking damages against Amerisource Bergen Drug Corp. of Chesterbrook, Pennsylvania, Cardinal Health Inc. of Columbus and McKesson Corp. of San Francisco, which together distribute about 85 percent of the prescription opioids in the nation. The suit says that from 2010 through 2015, the wholesale distributors sold more than 290,000,000 opioids in Hamilton County.

The city's suit says the distributors "unlawfully filled suspicious orders of unusual size, orders deviating substantially from a normal pattern and/or orders of unusual frequency in Cincinnati, Ohio, and/or orders which (the companies) knew or should have known were likely to be delivered and/or diverted into Cincinnati."

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Columbus, says that by flooding Greater Cincinnati with millions of doses of opioids than anyone could consume, the companies opened floodgates to allow diversion to the illicit market. The suit says the companies illegally created a public nuisance and violated the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as RICO and more commonly used against organized crime.

To punish the drug distributors, the city is asking for unspecified damages that could run into the millions of dollars. The city not only wants triple damages under the RICO law but also compensation for the care of the region's population addicted to opioids, including infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

The companies were not immediately available for comment. But the industry representative for drug distributors, the Healthcare Distribution Alliance, has been pushing back against the legal actions. On Tuesday, the group's senior vice president, John Parker, said the lawsuits do not appreciate the complexity of the supply chain and, "that's why attempts to pin the blame for solely on distributors deliberately ignore the facts."

Cities, counties and states have opened a new chapter in the story of the nation's opioid epidemic by going to court this year against various points along the supply chain. Cincinnati's lawsuit pointed to the

December revelations by the Charleston Gazette-Mail in West Virginia of millions of doses of opioids flooding small towns.

Dayton, Lorain and Parma have already started legal action this year against distributors. In May, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine sued drug makers. The city of Chicago and counties in New York, California and West Virginia also have started litigation.

The Cincinnati lawsuit says the drug distributors evaded regulation for years and rarely filed all the necessary paperwork with the government for the amounts of drugs they were shipping into the Cincinnati region.

"The epidemic still rages because the fines and suspensions imposed by the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) do not change the conduct" of the companies, the suit says. "They pay fines as a cost of doing business in an industry (that) which generates billions of dollars in annual revenue."

THE BLADE

One of America's Great Newspapers

Cordray question looms over Ohio Dems gubernatorial primary

Published on August 15, 2017 | Updated 11:50 p. m.

COLUMBUS — Despite efforts by the Ohio Democratic Party to move into 2018 campaign mode, a large question mark hovers over the gubernatorial race in the form of Richard Cordray.

The former Ohio attorney general and treasurer who heads the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau could emerge as a Democratic front-runner to replace Republican Gov. John Kasich if he enters the race. But he still is a federal employee, appointed by President Obama in 2012 and under threat of firing by GOP President Trump.

The Republican Governors Association has made it clear it expects Mr. Cordray to jump into this race. It just submitted a second Freedom of Information Act request for bureau emails, cell phone, and other communication records.

It hopes to find evidence that Mr. Cordray violated the federal Hatch Act by discussing a potential run for partisan office with state and Cincinnati-area Democratic officials while still a federal employee.

"Ohioans deserve to know whether Richard Cordray is using his Consumer Financial Protection Bureau office for political gain at the expense of taxpayers," RGA Communications Director Jon Thompson said.

Ohio Democratic Party Chairman David Pepper said Monday time is running out for a decision.

"I think anyone looking to run for statewide office — there aren't that many months left before you really have to get going," he said. "It's up to every candidate, but we think obviously the fall is a big time when people are going to start to pay attention and pay more attention in the spring."

Mr. Cordray narrowly lost his re-election bid in 2010 to Attorney General Mike DeWine, who is among four high-profile candidates seeking the Republican nomination for governor.

Mr. Cordray has been serving in a high-profile position created in reaction to the misdeeds of Wall Street that contributed to the last recession in 2008.

"The decision here is pretty fascinating because there are probably a lot of people on the left who would like him to stay on the job to the bitter end," said Kyle Kondik, communications director for the University of Virginia Center for Politics and author of "The Bellwether: Why Ohio Picks the President." He also served in communications for Mr. Cordray when he was attorney general.

"The term runs until next summer, so he still has close to a year left in the job," he said. "If he leaves, Trump can appoint a replacement who would not be very amenable to people like Elizabeth Warren and other Democrats who really believe in the agency."

Mr. Kondik noted that Mr. Cordray may not have much residual name recognition in Ohio after five years in Washington. There would be no guarantee that the nomination would be his for the taking.

"There is the potential he could make a pretty big splash if he has a big announcement and if he came into the race with endorsements from heavy hitters like Barack Obama, who appointed him, or Elizabeth Warren, one of the most prominent Senate Democrats and the architect of the CFPB," he said.

The already announced Democratic candidates include state Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D., Boardman), Cincinnati area former state Rep. Connie Pillich, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, and former Akron area U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton.

In addition to Mr. DeWine, Republicans are offering Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor, Secretary of State Jon Husted, and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, of Wadsworth.

Henson, Libby

From: Cho, Joy
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 9:17 AM
To: Westlake, Libby
Subject: RE: E-Clips for 8/15/2017
Attachments: E-Clips (8-15-17).docx

From: Westlake, Libby
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 8:52 AM
To: Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: E-Clips for 8/15/2017

HOUSE E-CLIPS 8/15/2017

AP Associated Press

DEMOCRATS SET FIRST OHIO GOVERNOR RACE DEBATE SEPT. 12

Ohio Democrats plan to kick off a series of debates for their party's 2018 governor nomination next month in eastern Ohio, their state chairman said Monday.

The Columbus Dispatch Ohio's Greatest Online Newspaper

OHIO'S URBAN DISTRICTS UP, SUBURBS DOWN IN STATE FUNDING

Most Ohio school districts will return to action during the next three weeks without much new state money to fund operations.

BILLIONAIRE GIVES \$1 MILLION TO PRO-HUSTED SUPER PAC

A Dayton-area man who made his billions in dog food has contributed \$1 million to a super PAC supporting Jon Husted's campaign for the Republican nomination for governor.

DEMOCRATS RUNNING FOR OHIO GOVERNOR WILL DEBATE BEGINNING SEPT. 12

The four candidates seeking the Democratic nomination for Ohio governor have committed to mixing it up in a series of six regional debates.

DID HEALTHCARE CO-OP RIP OFF SMALL OHIO COMMUNITIES?

A 4-year-old group of governments created to lower health-care costs for thousands of public employees has been ravaged by accusations of mismanagement and millions of dollars in deficits.

Dayton Daily News

www.daytondailynews.com

DAYTON AREA'S RICHEST MAN GIVES \$1M TO GROUP BACKING HUSTED FOR GOVERNOR

Billionaire philanthropist Clay Mathile donated \$1 million to a super PAC that is backing Republican Jon Husted for governor next year, according to federal campaign finance filings.

LOCAL DRIVERS LOOK TO TAKE RED-LIGHT CAMERA FIGHT TO SUPREME COURT

Opponents of red light traffic cameras are now asking the Ohio Supreme Court to declare them unconstitutional because of the way tickets are written and processed.

THE PLAIN DEALER

OHIO DEMOCRATS ANNOUNCE FIRST GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE

The Ohio Democratic Party announced the first in a series of gubernatorial debates among the four declared candidates will be held in early September.

SPECIAL ELECTION ON QUICKEN LOANS ARENA DEAL WOULD COST CLEVELAND MORE THAN \$760,000

A special election on whether Cleveland should commit tax dollars to an upgrade of Quicken Loans Arena would cost city taxpayers \$760,000.

CHARLOTTESVILLE SUSPECT PREVIOUSLY ACCUSED OF THREATENING MOTHER: OHIO POLITICS ROUNDUP

More on the suspect in the deadly car assault at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville. Petitions on The Q renovation finally get delivered to the elections board. And Democrats gear up for debates.

THE ENQUIRER

OHIO GOP SOUNDED A LOT LIKE DONALD TRUMP IN RESPONSES TO CHARLOTTESVILLE

President Donald Trump sustained bipartisan criticism this weekend for neglecting to call out white supremacists who organized demonstrations that turned violent Saturday in Charlottesville, Virginia.

THE BLADE

The Blade of America's Great Newspapers

OHIO DEMOCRATIC PARTY HOLDING FIRST GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE IN SEPTEMBER

The field of candidates may or may not be complete, but the Ohio Democratic Party will forge ahead with the first of six planned debates featuring candidates for governor in 2018.

HOUSE CLIPS



8/15/17

Democrats set first Ohio governor race debate Sept. 12

Today

CINCINNATI (AP) — Ohio Democrats plan to kick off a series of debates for their party's 2018 governor nomination next month in eastern Ohio, their state chairman said Monday.

The four current candidates will meet Sept. 12 at Martins Ferry High School in a region where Republican Donald Trump ran strongly in the 2016 presidential race.

Pepper said they hope to debate in all of the state's regions, with possibly three debates this year and three more next year.

"I think this process will bring out the best in the candidates; they will energize our voters," Pepper said. "That will lead to the best candidate with the best momentum hitting next year's general election."

He said Democrats want to highlight that they will be the candidates of change and what the impact of Republican policies has been in the state. Democrats are trying to bounce back from a Republican sweep of 2014 statewide races, and to help Democratic U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown hold onto his seat in his 2018 re-election race.

The four announced Democratic candidates are former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, former state legislator Connie Pillich and state Sen. Joe Schiavoni.

The Republicans have three statewide officeholders and a fourth-term congressman running to succeed two-term GOP Gov. John Kasich, a 2016 presidential challenger to Trump who is term-limited. They are Attorney General Mike DeWine, Secretary of State Jon Husted, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and Rep. Jim Renacci.

Pepper said he doesn't expect the party to endorse a candidate during the primary. Other candidates still could jump in, including former Attorney General Richard Cordray. Pepper said Monday he doesn't know whether Cordray will run, but said with debates beginning, candidates should make up their minds soon.

"The campaign is starting," he said.

Most Ohio school districts will return to action during the next three weeks without much new state money to fund operations.

Under the new two-year state budget that the legislature passed this summer, the state's 55 urban districts generally fared the best as far as funding. Suburban districts, overall, saw cuts — although that generally was not true in Franklin County.

Best is a relative term, however. School-funding increases average about 1 percent per year for Ohio's 610 districts, roughly half of the projected rate of inflation. Urban districts, which are seeing the biggest increases, still average less than 2.5 percent per year.

"For some districts, it's been a pretty long six years," said Howard Fleeter, an analyst with the Ohio Education Policy Institute, noting that school-funding increases from 2011 to 2019 will total 7.6 percent. "Overall growth has not kept pace with inflation."

Statewide, most districts face flat funding or cuts. The funding formula cap increases at 3 percent per year, except for some fast-growing districts that were able to get larger increases. The formula also protects some districts from cuts, unless they are losing tangible personal property-tax reimbursements or have lost significant enrollment over two years.

The Department of Education breaks down districts into eight groups based on similar demographic and geographic characteristics. During the next two years, those classified as midsize and large urban districts will see average funding increases of about \$300 per pupil, or more than 4.5 percent.

That includes Columbus, which is set to get 4.6 percent more over two years, a smaller increase than in the previous two-year state budget. The midsize group includes Whitehall, South-Western and Groveport Madison, which are expected to get two-year increases of 11.5 percent, 11.6 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively.

On the other end are large, wealthier suburban districts, which overall face a 1.9 percent funding cut over two years. Of the 46 districts in that category, 26 are getting flat funding or cuts. Smaller, generally less-wealthy suburban districts also see almost no funding change over two years.

But that's not the case in central Ohio. Olentangy and most of the suburban districts in Franklin County will get funding increases, thanks to unique circumstances.

Three major factors determine whether a district receives more money: enrollment changes, reductions in tangible personal property-tax reimbursements, and, most prominently, changes in the state share index, which uses per-pupil property values and median income to determine what percentage of funding the state will cover. Essentially, the wealthier the district, the less the state covers.

Of the 368 districts that are seeing their state share index drop from 2017 to 2019, 80 percent get funding cuts or no increases over the next two years. Meanwhile, of the 212 districts expected to see a state share-index increase, 84 percent are getting more money.

Fleeter said the drop in the state share index for 60 percent of all districts — lowering the state's overall share from 48.1 percent to 46.6 percent — continues to highlight a flaw in the formula. This is the second consecutive biennium in which the state share has dropped, potentially shifting more of the school-funding burden to local taxpayers.

"The same problems I had with the state share index — that it doesn't properly take income into account — we still have that issue," Fleeter said. The state share index fell for 90 percent of Ohio's 229 rural districts, largely a result of lower enrollments and rising farmland values.

However, Olentangy and 13 districts in Franklin County saw their state share indexes rise. Of those, six have median incomes ranked in the top 50 in the state.

Olentangy and eight of 11 suburban districts in Franklin County will receive funding increases, compared with just 40 percent of suburban districts statewide. The two-year increases range from \$333 per pupil for Reynoldsburg to \$47 for New Albany.

Population growth is a key factor in the brighter funding picture in central Ohio. While 72 percent of Ohio school districts saw enrollment decline from 2014 to 2016, Olentangy and 14 of 16 Franklin County districts saw enrollment increases — all but Hamilton and Groveport Madison.

Enrollment gains help hold down per-pupil property valuations, a vital element of the formula's state share index.

Three-year average per-pupil property values declined for only 14 percent of Ohio districts, but they dropped for 10 of 16 Franklin County districts. Of those 10, nine will receive funding increases, and the 10th, Worthington, also would get more if not for the loss of \$3.8 million in tangible personal property-tax reimbursements.

Fleeter noted that Franklin County districts also benefit from a bit of lucky timing. The county went through a property value reappraisal this year, and the county auditor determined that home values had risen 14 percent since the previous update three years ago. Those higher valuations don't matter in the funding formula now, but they will factor heavily when the state share index is recomputed in 2019 for the next state budget. If districts look wealthier, the state share is likely to drop.

"It makes a difference whether you recently went through a reappraisal or you didn't," Fleeter said.

Sen. Randy Gardner, R-Bowling Green, a veteran legislator who worked closely on the latest school-funding budget, said concerns about the state share index are fair, and he's open to looking at them.

"I think we should continually evaluate every two years whether the formula is working or not," he said.

Billionaire gives \$1 million to pro-Husted super PAC

Posted at 12:01 AM, Updated at 6:01 AM

A Dayton-area man who made his billions in dog food has contributed \$1 million to a super PAC supporting Jon Husted's campaign for the Republican nomination for governor.

Clayton Mathile, a long-time major GOP contributor who sold his Iams pet food company for \$2.3 billion in 1999, made the seven-figure donation to Ohio Conservatives for a Change.

The federal super PAC, which is legally forbidden from coordinating its activities with Husted and his campaign committee, raised \$1.3 million through only four contributions in June, according to its filing with the Federal Elections Commission.

A media spokeswoman for Mathile did not respond to requests for comment on Monday. The Mathile family has contributed nearly \$123,000 directly to Husted since 2013. Clayton Mathile is ranked by Forbes magazine as the 474th wealthiest person in the world with a net worth of \$3.8 billion.

Ohio Conservatives for a Change had not spent much money — only \$10,298, atop \$29,377 in unpaid bills — as of June 30. It appears to only have recently started digital advertising in support of Husted, Ohio's two-term secretary of state and a former House speaker whose district spanned suburban Dayton.

Listen to the latest Buckeye Forum politics podcast

Noting the Husted campaign does not collaborate with Ohio Conservatives for a Change, campaign spokesman Josh Eck declined to comment.

Ohio Conservatives for Change, which touts Husted as a “conservative” who can keep the American dream alive for Ohioans, was created on April 25. Super PACs are allowed to raise and spend unlimited amounts advocating for, or opposing, political candidates.

The group’s treasurer is Joel Riter, a Statehouse lobbyist for Ohio’s concrete industry and a former aide to Republican Treasurer Josh Mandel, a U.S. Senate candidate in 2018.

Riter is involved with other super PACs, including the Government Integrity Fund, a dark-money group that spent \$1.3 million in support of Mandel’s unsuccessful 2012 bid to unseat Democrat U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown. Riter referred questions to the PAC’s spokesman, who did not respond to an email Monday.

In addition to Mathile’s big check, Karen Buchwald Wright and Thomas Rastin, the wife and husband behind Ariel Corp. in Mount Vernon, gave \$125,000 each. Cleveland-based health insurer Medical Mutual gave \$50,000 to the super PAC.

Three of the four candidates seeking the GOP nomination next May are sitting on sizeable campaign account balances — \$4.7 million for Attorney General Mike DeWine, \$4.3 million for Husted and \$4 million for U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, R-Wadsworth, who loaned his campaign \$4 million. DeWine loaned \$1 million to his campaign. Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor reported a balance of \$436,884 in her campaign account as of June 30.

Democrats running for Ohio governor will debate beginning Sept. 12

Posted Aug 14, 2017 at 11:31 AM, Updated Aug 14, 2017 at 11:40 AM

The four candidates seeking the Democratic nomination for Ohio governor have committed to mixing it up in a series of six regional debates.

The first debate is set for 7 p.m. Sept. 12 at Martins Ferry High School in Belmont County in eastern Ohio, Democratic Party Chairman David Pepper announced Monday morning.

Two more debates are expected to follow this year, with three additional face-offs next year prior to the May primary, Pepper said.

The Democrats currently running for governor are state Sen. Joe Schiavoni, D-Boardman; Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley; former state Rep. Connie Pillich, D-Montgomery; and former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton, D-Barberton.

The staging of the first debate in Martins Ferry is to illustrate “so many communities have felt left behind by the current Republican leadership in Columbus,” Pepper said. “We are very excited we have a slate of candidates show they are very eager to go out and speak to the voters about what they want to do.”

Pepper was asked if he expects the need to add a fifth podium to the debate stage in Martins Ferry. Consumer Federal Protection Bureau Director Rich Cordray, a former state treasurer and attorney general from Grove City, is a potential candidate, but would need to quit, or be fired by President Donald Trump, to run.

“I don’t know what is going to happen there,” Pepper said. “Every month that goes by is precious time in a campaign ... going too far into the fall is pretty late” to begin raising money and raising your profile with voters.

The Democratic debates will be streamed live on Facebook and questions will be taken from the audience and via Facebook and Twitter.

The state chairman said the party is committed to presenting its candidates to primary voters, while he called Republican talks about potential debates as a “food fight.”

Americans for Prosperity-Ohio hoped to stage a Sept. 5 debate in Columbus between the Republicans running for governor, but Attorney General Mike DeWine declined, saying it was too early. Secretary of State Jon Husted, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, R-Wadsworth, also are seeking the nomination.

Did healthcare co-op rip off small Ohio communities?

Posted at 6:19 AM, Updated at 6:19 AM

A 4-year-old group of governments created to lower health-care costs for thousands of public employees has been ravaged by accusations of mismanagement and millions of dollars in deficits.

The Ohio auditor’s office and some county prosecutors are investigating the Ohio Public Entity Consortium Healthcare Cooperative, a self-insurance program with headquarters near Plain City.

The consortium’s aim was to lower costs by spreading risk among a pool of more than 3,200 employees — mostly police and firefighters. But the operation ran deficits from its inception, and they have grown to exceed \$12 million, investigators say.

Many of the 150 local governments spread across Ohio are now part of at least three lawsuits against the cooperative and its operator for fraud, breach of contract and illegal operations. Local members include Plain City and West Jefferson in Madison County and Orange Township in Delaware County.

The founder, Frank Harmon, is under fire, accused of luring members with broken promises, holding illegal meetings and failing to file required financial reports.

As a council of governments, the Healthcare Cooperative is subject to Ohio's open-records laws and rules of accountability, including filings with the state auditor within 10 days of forming. But Robert Smith, an assistant chief legal counsel in the auditor's office, said his office learned only last month that the consortium exists. And at least three years of financial reports were never filed.

Missing reports, secret meetings and ethics questions have created mistrust, finger-pointing and uncertainty, said attorney Mark Stemm, who represents many of the governments in lawsuits against the cooperative.

"The lack of transparency and Sunshine Act violations have been astounding," Stemm said recently in an email to The Dispatch.

Harmon even refused to release the list of the consortium's member governments, saying they are "trade secrets," according to the lawsuits.

Neither Harmon nor Shawn Organ, the attorney representing Harmon and the consortium, returned calls for comment.

Chip Cooper, Harmon's personal attorney, would say only that Harmon's company, Ohio Insurance Services, "has always been about the members and making sure that they have the best possible coverage."

The contract that member governments or public bodies signed imposes three major liabilities on its members, even before any of their employees fall ill or need medical care:

- Members must pay their share of any cash deficit.
- If 20 percent or more of the member governments leave before three years, those who leave must pay a 25 percent penalty.
- Members who leave early also must pay a penalty equal to three times their monthly contribution.

If it were to leave the consortium, Orange Township, with about 60 enrolled employees, could be forced to pay as much as \$480,000, said attorney Paul LaFayette, who discussed lawsuit options with the township on Monday.

As more members leave, or threaten to leave, he said, the stakes become higher for those who remain.

"You're now changing the pool. You're changing the risk dramatically."

Orange Township has agreed to stay in the pool, but trustees voted to join LaFayette's lawsuit.

Lee Bodnar, who became township administrator last year after the deal was made, gave this summary: "Everybody got into the consortium with the understanding that we were all going to pay less at the end of the year ... and that isn't going to happen."

The West Licking Joint Fire District in Pataskala has been billed more than \$400,000 for leaving the pool early.

Investigators also think Harmon is unfairly profiting, taking in as much as \$2 million annually in fees and commissions, from a pool of \$50 million in government funds.

As part of the plan's marketing agreement, Ohio Insurance Services Agency, owned by Harmon, was paid \$50 per month for each enrolled employee. As a Healthcare Cooperative board member, Harmon had "sole discretion" over his own fees, according to a lawsuit recently filed in Stark County.

Steven Johnson, of the Burnham and Flower Insurance Group, which also serves governments, said of Harmon's commission: "That's too much. That's not normal."

Harmon's dual role as businessman and public administrator also is under scrutiny.

"He sits on a public agency board and at the same time has a contract with the board which pays his company millions in fees," said Stemm. "And then he claims that because he's a public employee he's subject to sovereign immunity."

Some say Harmon had been a well-regarded insurance broker since the 1980s.

"Until this, I never had any issues with Frank," said Matthew DeTemple, director of the Ohio Township Association, which has about 1,300 member townships who now share "concern and anger," he said.

A tipping point was a May board meeting in which members demanded answers and Harmon assured them everything was fine, said Martha Balyeat, Van Wert city auditor and the board's former chairwoman.

After the June meeting, Balyeat learned she was no longer on the consortium board.

"Looking back, it's like, 'What the hell were we thinking?'" she said. "We should have been questioning them more."

In June, Harmon announced that the Healthcare Cooperative was replacing its claims administrator. Some were denied medical care after losing coverage for critical procedures, townships reported.

"To do this to first responders and their families is unconscionable," said Renee Sonnett, Plain City fiscal officer. "They made employees decide 'do you want the frying pan or the skillet?' We had no say in it."

The Ohio auditor's office is using an independent auditor to compile and audit missing financial documents and "to help parties resolve their differences to make sure the employees health claims are taken care of," said Smith, the assistant chief legal counsel.

"The ultimate justice is making sure you don't harm the individual employees," he said.

According to campaign-finance records, Harmon has donated \$16,750 to the campaign of Ohio Auditor Dave Yost since 2014.

That's not relevant, said Ben Marrison, the auditor's spokesman, because the auditor's office has no authority to penalize councils of government for not organizing properly.

"We have no authority to be more aggressive, to do any more," said Marrison. "It's one of the areas we want to have the legislature take another look at."

Dayton Daily News

www.daytondailynews.com

Dayton area's richest man gives \$1M to group backing Husted for governor

Updated 6:39 p.m Monday, Aug. 14, 2017

Columbus – Billionaire philanthropist Clay Mathile donated \$1 million to a super PAC that is backing Republican Jon Husted for governor next year, according to federal campaign finance filings.

Between late April and the end of June, Ohio Conservatives for Change raised \$1.3 million from four donors: \$1 million from Mathile, \$125,000 each from Mt. Vernon residents Thomas Ratin and Karen Buchwald Wright and \$50,000 from Medical Mutual.

The super PAC, which has a slick website that features photos of Husted and his family, is required to act independently from Husted's campaign committee.

Mathile made his money in pet food. He started Iams in Dayton and sold the company to Procter & Gamble for \$2.3 billion in 1999.

While Husted lives in suburban Columbus, he has deep ties to the Miami Valley. He is a University of Dayton graduate who got his start in government as an aide to a Montgomery County commissioner. Husted worked for the Greater Dayton Chamber of Commerce and represented the Kettering area as a state representative and senator.

The Mathile family has contributed more than \$1 million to political candidates and parties in Ohio since 2011, according to state campaign finance reports.

Husted is running the GOP primary against Attorney General Mike DeWine of Cedarville, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor of Green and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci of Wadsworth.

On the Democratic side, the declared candidates are Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, state Sen. Joe Schiavoni of Boardman, former state representative Connie Pillich of Cincinnati and former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton of Akron.

Local drivers look to take red-light camera fight to Supreme Court

Updated 5:36 p.m Monday, Aug. 14, 2017

Columbus – Opponents of red light traffic cameras are now asking the Ohio Supreme Court to declare them unconstitutional because of the way tickets are written and processed.

Tickets issued via automated traffic cameras go through a civil administrative process, which opponents say violates due process rights. The system relies on hearsay evidence and denies motorists the ability to mount a defense, the lawsuit filed this month says.

Lawsuits brought by motorists against Dayton, West Carrollton and Trotwood were consolidated into one case. Judges at the trial court and 2nd District Court of Appeals found that the civil procedures don't

infringe upon constitutional rights. But courts elsewhere across the state have come to different conclusions.

Traffic camera opponents are now asking the high court to decide the matter.

Ohio Supreme Court spokesman Bret Crowe said the court will likely decide within four to seven months whether to take the case.

Last month, in a split decision, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that the 2015 state law that makes it all but impossible for cities to use automatic traffic cameras is unconstitutional because it conflicts with cities' home rule powers. The decision impacts 8 million licensed drivers, delivers cities a big win on home rule powers and gives cities the go-ahead to turn the traffic cameras back on.

The Ohio Constitution, adopted in 1912, gives municipalities "home-rule" powers of self-governance as long as local ordinances don't conflict with the state's general laws.

Traffic cameras have been used across Ohio since at least 2002. Opponents see the devices as automated speed traps that allow cities to fill their coffers. Supporters view them as a means to improve road safety and free up police resources for other matters.

THE PLAIN DEALER

Ohio Democrats announce first gubernatorial debate

Updated on August 14, 2017 at 2:44 PM, Posted on August 14, 2017 at 11:48 AM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- The Ohio Democratic Party announced the first in a series of gubernatorial debates among the four declared candidates will be held in early September.

Party chairman David Pepper said Monday in a conference call with reporters the Democratic candidates for governor will take the stage Sept. 12 at Martins Ferry High School in Belmont County as part of a strategy to hold at least six debates in different regions in the state.

The choice to have the first debate in Southeast Ohio was a deliberate attempt to acquaint voters who might feel like Columbus is failing them with the mostly unknown Democratic Party candidates, Pepper said. It will be livestreamed online so those in the rest of the state can watch with questions also coming from Facebook and Twitter.

The party hopes to have six debates over the course of the primary - three to close out the year and three in 2018.

All the candidates - former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, former state Senate Minority Leader Joe Schiavoni and former state Sen. Connie Pillich - have agreed to attend.

"We've been watching with interest the Republican side of the aisle where they seem to already be in a food fight about debates," Pepper said.

A recent attempt by the Koch Brothers-backed Americans for Prosperity to hold a debate with the four Republican candidates recently fell through when the most high-profile candidate - Attorney General Mike DeWine - refused to participate. Secretary of State Jon Husted followed suit soon after.

One name who won't be on the Democratic stage as of right now who could be a game changer for the primary: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray.

Cordray holds a nonpolitical position in the administration and cannot campaign or run for public office without leaving his post - either by resigning or being fired by Republican President Donald Trump - though rumors are rampant that the former attorney general is seriously considering a run.

"If someone else is interested in running, when we hear from them we'll also do the same thing, then we'll see if we have four or five podiums on the stage, but right now we have four," Pepper said.

Pepper said he didn't know any specifics about Cordray getting into the race, but felt the time to enter the race was rapidly closing. Former Cincinnati Mayor and talk show host Jerry Springer and former U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich are also rumored to be considering bids.

"I think anyone looking to run for statewide office, there aren't that many months left before you really have to get going," Pepper said. "As you can see, we're moving forward."

Pepper said he doesn't anticipate using the debates as a means for endorsing a candidate in the primary, something the party has done in the past. The party did so with 2014 gubernatorial candidate Ed FitzGerald, who lost the race in a landslide.

"Our approach is may the best woman or man win," Pepper said.

Special election on Quicken Loans Arena deal would cost Cleveland more than \$760,000
Updated on August 14, 2017 at 4:38 PM, Posted on August 14, 2017 at 4:05 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio - A special election on whether Cleveland should commit tax dollars to an upgrade of Quicken Loans Arena would cost city taxpayers \$760,000.

And given the rules in the city's charter, the issue is more likely to appear on the ballot of a special election early next year than on the ballot of the Nov. 7 general election.

Cleveland would be billed for the cost of the special election. The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections figures an election costs about \$2,300 a precinct. In Cleveland, where there are 332 precincts, the bill would total \$763,600.

"It's going to cost a lot of money," City Council President Kevin Kelley said. "There's really no way around that issue."

Four members of City Council think they might have a way to get the measure on the November ballot and avoid the expense of a special election, but it remains to be seen whether their idea meets the requirements of the city's charter.

What's the issue?

The city's charter requires a referendum be put before voters no later than six months and no earlier than 60 days from when the measure is validated by the board of elections. In this case, the board must determine whether the petitions seeking the referendum have been signed by 6,013 registered Cleveland voters.

That work must be done by next Monday.

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled last week that City Council Clerk Pat Britt must accept the petitions for a referendum on The Q deal. The city reviewed the petitions and forwarded the documents Monday to the elections board.

Assuming the petitions are approved, City Council would then schedule the referendum for a vote.

The charter, though, requires that action be taken at a regularly scheduled council meeting. The next regular meeting isn't scheduled until Sept. 18, which is less than 60 days from the Nov. 7 election.

The May 2018 primary is out because it is well beyond the six-month window.

Is there a solution?

Four members of council -- Kevin Conwell, Jeff Johnson, Mike Polensek and Zack Reed - drafted a letter to Kelley ON Monday asking that the Sept. 18 meeting be moved up to Sept. 6. That date would be 62 days before the general election.

You can read their letter below. Mobile users click here.

All four opposed the plan to use of admissions taxes collected at The Q to pay the city's share of the upgrades. Johnson and Reed also are running for mayor.

Their theory is that moving the meeting would allow council to put the issue before voters in November and avoid the whopper of an election bill.

"We've got to be fiscally responsible, Polensek said.

Kelley, in an interview Monday, said he will review the letter once he receives it. But he suspects that by changing the date, the session would no longer constitute a "regularly scheduled" meeting.

Council's regular meetings are held on Monday evenings. Sept. 6 is a Wednesday.

What sparked the referendum effort?

The Cleveland Cavaliers want to make \$140 million in improvements to modernize the Q with a glass front, public gathering spaces and dining areas that will let fans watch the game while they eat.

Representatives for the team say that without the renovations, Cleveland could have trouble remaining competitive with other cities for major concerts and events.

The Cavaliers, Cuyahoga County, the city of Cleveland and Destination Cleveland agreed to split the cost. The county would borrow the \$140 million. The Cavaliers would take on half. Cleveland's share would come from admission taxes collected over 11 years beginning in 2024.

A coalition led by Greater Cleveland Congregations, an advocacy group made up of urban and suburban religious institutions, Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus and SEIU District 1199, argued that Cleveland's struggling neighborhoods would not benefit from the deal.

They called for a community benefits agreement under which the Cavaliers would contribute toward a fund to help Clevelanders.

City Council moved ahead with legislation authorizing the upgrades deal on April 24. Mayor Frank Jackson signed it into law April 25, and also signed a contract with the county for the deal.

That prompted the coalition to gather signatures on petitions for a referendum.

What happened in court?

The referendum effort stalled in May when Britt, through a deputy, refused to accept the coalition's petitions. Britt argued that the referendum would unconstitutionally impair a legal contract - the agreement between the city and the county.

The dispute landed before the Ohio Supreme Court, which ruled 4-3 last week that Britt had a clear legal duty to accept the petitions and begin the review process to determine if they were sufficient to force the issue onto the ballot.

The ruling leaves the project in limbo, at least in the short term. Cuyahoga County delayed selling bonds to finance the project while Cleveland's role was being contested. The Cavaliers had hoped to begin work right after the playoffs ended in June.

And the ruling may have scuttled Cleveland's chances to land an NBA All-Star Game in the near future. The NBA had delayed its selection process for the 2020 and 2021 games, but said in a letter that it could wait no longer if work on the improvements does not begin by Sept. 15.

Charlottesville suspect previously accused of threatening mother: Ohio Politics Roundup

Posted on August 15, 2017 at 6:20 AM

More on the suspect in the deadly car assault at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville. Petitions on The Q renovation finally get delivered to the elections board. And Democrats gear up for debates. All this in the Ohio Politics Roundup from Seth Richardson.

No bail for Fields: The Associated Press reports the Ohio man accused of ramming a car into a group of protesters, killing one and injuring more than a dozen more, during a white supremacist rally was denied bail.

A friend of James Alex Fields Jr. of Maumee told AP that Fields said he took a trip to Germany to "get to the Fatherland."

Fields' past: The AP also reports that Fields was previously accused of threatening his mother with a knife and beating her.

"The records from the Florence Police Department in Kentucky show the man's mother had called police in 2011. Fields' mother, Samantha Bloom, told police he stood behind her wielding a 12-inch knife. Bloom is disabled and uses a wheelchair."

"In another incident in 2010, Bloom said that Fields smacked her in the head and locked her in the bathroom after she told him to stop playing video games. Bloom told officers Fields was on medication to control his temper."

Hockingport victim: Bill Burke was one of those mowed down in the car attack during the Charlottesville white supremacist rally. Burke was counterprotesting the Nazis.

He suffered significant injuries, but The Columbus Dispatch reports Burke is back in Athens County recovering.

By the way: The Daily Stormer, the periodical of choice for many white supremacists, has an Ohio connection. Check out this February story from Columbus Alive.

Also, as the Dayton Daily News' Laura Bischoff reports, the Nazi-sympathizer website keeps getting booted by website hosts.

Cosgrove's sticking with Trump: Merck CEO Kenneth Frazier resigned from President Donald Trump's American Manufacturing Council over the president's initial unwillingness to specifically denounce the white supremacists in Charlottesville.

Cleveland Clinic CEO Toby Cosgrove won't follow suit and will remain an adviser to the president, The Plain Dealer's Ginger Christ reports.

Debate time: As I report, the Ohio Democratic Party announced the first Democratic gubernatorial debate of the election scheduled for Sept. 12 at Martins Ferry High School in Belmont County.

Party chairman David Pepper said they're hoping to hold six debates among the current contenders for the Democratic nomination: three to close out 2017 and three in 2018.

Notably missing from that group (as of now) is Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray.

"I think anyone looking to run for statewide office, there aren't that many months left before you really have to get going," Pepper said. "As you can see, we're moving forward."

Speaking of Cordray: This site is now up. The will-he-or-won't-he is probably going to last forever.

The Q: Activists hoping to block the taxpayer-funded expansion of the Quicken Loans Arena finally had their petitions delivered to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections on Monday, as cleveland.com's Robert Higgs reports.

The delivery marks the end of a months-long battle between community activists and the city, which eventually made its way to the Ohio Supreme Court, though it's unlikely the question will be on the ballot for the November municipal elections.

"Assuming enough signatures are deemed valid, the issue likely won't go before voters until a special election early next year," Higgs writes.

But...: That special election? Higgs reports it could cost taxpayers more than \$750,000. Cleveland City Council must accept at least 6,013 petitions at least 60 days out from an election. The problem is the next council meeting is Monday and the following one is Sept. 18.

Four council members who opposed the expansion think they have a plan though: move the regularly scheduled Sept. 18 meeting up to Sept. 6 - 62 days before the election.

"Their theory is that moving the meeting would allow council to put the issue before voters in November and avoid the whopper of an election bill," Higgs writes.

Dog food billionaires for Husted: Secretary of State Jon Husted apparently locked down the dog-food billionaire vote on the Republican side of the 2018 gubernatorial race, according to The Columbus Dispatch's Randy Ludlow.

Clayton Mathile of the Dayton area sold Iams Pet Food for \$2.3 billion in 1999 and just made a seven-figure donation to Ohio Conservatives for a Change, a political action committee supporting Husted, Ludlow reports. That represents the bulk of the \$1.3 million raised through four contributions in June.

His name's in the phone book: Disgraced Attorney General Marc Dann, who resigned in lieu of impeachment after a sexual harassment cover-up, described his short time in office bluntly on Monday to The Columbus Dispatch.

"I was a jerk," Dann told reporter Alan Johnson. "I had an arrogance about me. ... I wish I would have learned to keep my mouth shut."

Dann is back to practicing law and, as the Dispatch reports, won't rule out a future run for office, though he did say it was unlikely.

An interesting piece in this story is the comment from one of the whistleblowers, who at the time was 26 and accused one of her higher-ups of sexual harassment.

"I'm now a liability and non-hirable to any company. Best advice to give anyone going through a hostile work environment, just walk away! Not worth the pain and anguish to not be able to find a job to provide for your family. No heroes were made in 'the whistle blower' process."

Not a ringing endorsement for other women who are being sexually harassed to come forward...

The "Resistance": Want to protest President Donald Trump? As the Cincinnati Enquirer's Monroe Trombly reports, you probably don't have to look far.

"Just as a variety of formal and informal tea party groups sprang up on the right in the early days of the Barack Obama administration, organizations such as Indivisible, Together We Will, and Our Revolution have sprung up on the left," Trombly writes.

Overdose deaths decline: Montgomery County, which the opioid epidemic has ravaged, got some good news this week: the number of opioid deaths decreased drastically between May and July.

As Lynn Hulse of the Dayton Daily News reports, the number of reported overdose deaths in May was 80. In July, it fell to 38.

Nixon lawyer teaches ethics: Former Nixon White House Counsel John Dean is coming to Ohio on Wednesday for a three-day tour with the Ohio Bar Association. Dean, along with Cleveland attorney James D. Robenalt, will be teaching a three-hour seminar on legal ethics.

Dean was White House counsel during the Watergate scandal and eventually pleaded guilty to a single felony count. He's become a staunch critic of the Republican Party in recent years.

Ryan backs Clyde: State Rep. Kathleen Clyde, a Democrat from Kent and candidate for secretary of state, got the backing from a prominent state Democrat on Monday when U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan of the Youngstown area announced his endorsement.

"We need more leaders like Kathleen in Columbus, who will end the partisan games and put Ohioans first," Ryan said in a statement. "Once elected I know we will immediately get to work as she always has to ensure every Ohioan's voice is heard and every Ohioan's vote is counted."

THE ENQUIRER

Ohio GOP sounded a lot like Donald Trump in responses to Charlottesville

Published 2:40 p.m. ET Aug. 14, 2017 | Updated 5:25 p.m. ET Aug. 14, 2017

COLUMBUS - President Donald Trump sustained bipartisan criticism this weekend for neglecting to call out white supremacists who organized demonstrations that turned violent Saturday in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In Ohio, which voted overwhelmingly for Trump, all four Republicans running for Ohio governor were echoing Trump. They sent tweets over the weekend that also neglected to call out white supremacists.

Ohio Democrats' statements were less vague, but a couple didn't mention white supremacists, either.

Among the clashes between the white supremacists and anti-fascist counter protesters Saturday: An Ohio man who grew up in Greater Cincinnati drove a car into a crowd of peaceful demonstrators, authorities said, killing one woman and injuring at least 19.

Trump finally called out "the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups" on Monday afternoon, declaring "racism is evil." Some of those groups had backed Trump in his election victory in November.

Here's what Trump originally tweeted.

Later Saturday, Trump condemned "hatred, bigotry and violence, on many sides."

Here's what his fellow Republicans in Ohio said. A couple referred to "bigotry" and "extremist ideology," but all avoided calling out white supremacists or neo-Nazis.

Contrast those with the statements from Ohio's two U.S. senators – both the Republican and the Democrat.

Worth noting: Portman, the Republican, had originally echoed Trump with this statement:

The responses from the Democrats running for Ohio governor ranged from a condemnation of "hate and bigotry" that sounded like some of the Republicans' statements to a couple of posts denouncing white supremacists.

Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel, a Republican running for U.S. Senate, first tweeted a statement similar to Trump's. Then he retweeted a GOP senator who was critical of Trump's rhetoric.

Mandel's primary opponent, Cleveland businessman Mike Gibbons, called out "racism" in a statement that sounded otherwise like Trump's.

Gov. John Kasich, a vocal dissenter on much of Trump's policy and rhetoric, originally followed suit with other GOP statements. Then, Kasich, sometimes named as a possible 2020 presidential candidate, took an opportunity to contrast himself with Trump.

THE BLADE

One of America's Great Newspapers

Ohio Democratic Party holding first gubernatorial debate in September

Published on Aug. 14, 2017 | Updated 11:27 p. m.

COLUMBUS — The field of candidates may or may not be complete, but the Ohio Democratic Party will forge ahead with the first of six planned debates featuring candidates for governor in 2018.

Party Chairman David Pepper contrasted the plan with the other side of the aisle, where an early debate proposed by the conservative Americans for Prosperity already has fallen through.

"We've been watching with interest the Republican side of the aisle where they seem to already be in a food fight about debates ...," he said. "Not surprisingly, I guess Mike DeWine didn't want to go. Jon Husted didn't want to go. Mary Taylor is then attacking them for not going.

"We're excited that we have a set of candidates that are very eager to go out and talk to voters about what they want to do to change our state," Mr. Pepper said.

The four candidates — for now — expected to participate in the first debate on Sept. 12 are former Akron area U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton, state Sen. Joe Schiavoni of Boardman, former Cincinnati state Rep. Connie Pillich, and Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley.

Still a wild card is Richard Cordray, a former Ohio attorney general who has spent the last five years as the nation's top consumer watchdog. Appointed by President Barack Obama, he would have to resign his federal job to run for governor.

"Every month that goes by is precious time in a campaign, precious time getting known, precious time to do your part in raising money," Mr. Pepper said. "Going too far into fall is getting pretty late. ... The debates are starting because the campaign is starting."

Republicans are offering Attorney General DeWine, Secretary of State Husted, Lt. Gov. Taylor, and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci of Wadsworth.

"I'm glad to see that the Democrats have announced their debate schedule, and I look forward to hearing them struggle to explain how raising taxes for a radical single-payer health care system, as well as other failed far-left policies, will help Ohio families," said Blaine Kelly, Ohio Republican Party spokesman.

"In the meantime, Republicans will continue traveling the state and meeting Ohioans who Democrats have turned their backs on," he said. "All of our Republican candidates have expressed interest in negotiating debates, and we look forward to doing so when the time is right."

The first Democratic debate will be held at Martin's Ferry High School in Belmont County. Mr. Pepper expects two more this calendar year and three more in the spring before the May primary.

The chairman said he does not anticipate that the party will endorse a candidate early, as it has in past elections.

The debates will be streamed live via Facebook and Twitter with a chance for questions from the audience. The Democratic candidates can boost their name recognition. All the GOP contenders have held multiple statewide offices except Mr. Renacci, who serves a northeast Ohio congressional district.

Those seeking tickets for the Martins Ferry event may text DEBATE to 90975 or go online to **ohiodems.org/debate**.

Henson, Libby

From: Cho, Joy
Sent: Friday, August 04, 2017 9:36 AM
To: Westlake, Libby
Subject: RE: E-Clips for 8/4/2017
Attachments: E-Clips (8-4-17).docx

From: Westlake, Libby
Sent: Friday, August 04, 2017 9:00 AM
To: Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: E-Clips for 8/4/2017

HOUSE E-CLIPS 8/4/2017

The Columbus Dispatch
Ohio's Greatest Online Newspaper

CENTRAL OHIO SAYS STATE POLICY IS SQUEEZING OUT LOCAL FILMMAKING

Central Ohio filmmakers, unhappy with what's viewed as an uneven distribution of tax credits, are calling on the state to cap the amount that film projects can collect.

HOUSEHOLDER MAY HAVE TO RETURN MORE IMPROPER CAMPAIGN CASH

After refunding an improper \$70,000 campaign contribution from the Summit County Republican Party this week, it now appears Rep. Larry Householder may have to give back even more.

CRAIG TO RUN FOR SENATE SEAT, SETTING UP LIKELY PRIMARY

State Rep. Hearcel Craig has announced he will run for an open Ohio Senate seat in Columbus, setting up a likely Democratic primary.

MARY TAYLOR TICKED AT OTHER GOP CANDIDATES FOR SKIPPING DEBATE

With Mike DeWine and Jon Husted taking a pass, the first proposed debate between Republican candidates for governor is a no-go.

GIBBONS ADDS TWO MORE STAFFERS WITH KASICH TIES TO CAMPAIGN TEAM

Cleveland banker Mike Gibbons has added two more staffers with ties to Gov. John Kasich in his quest to beat Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel in the Republican Primary for U.S. Senate.

EDITORIAL: ECOT'S NO GOOD, REALLY BAD WEEK

Ohio's big online charter school — accused of being a massive taxpayer ripoff — has had a really rough week.

THE PLAIN DEALER

ROSENBERGER MEMO SEEMS TO CALL INTO QUESTION LEGALITY OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY GOP DONATION TO HOUSE SPEAKER CANDIDATE

A recent \$63,000 donation from the Cuyahoga County Republican Party to State Rep. Larry Householder's campaign might break state elections law, according to a confidential memo sent Wednesday by Republican Ohio House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger.

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION BROUGHT CASH, VISITORS, ATTENTION TO CLEVELAND, ECONOMIC STUDIES SAY: OHIO POLITICS

ROUNDUP

Researchers finished counting the millions the Republican National Convention brought to Cleveland. Corey Lewandowski says he isn't paid a dime from an Ohio payday loan lender. And the Cuyahoga GOP may have to ask for \$63,000 back from State Rep. Larry Householder.

THE BLADE

One of America's Great Newspapers

GRANT TO FUND DRUG-PREVENTION EDUCATION IN CLASSROOMS

Local law enforcement agencies have received grant funds for drug-prevention education in classrooms this coming school year.

The Vindicator

SALES TAX HOLIDAY KICKS OFF TODAY

Local business owners are hoping to see a sales boost with this weekend's sales-tax holiday.

EDITORIAL: KASICH IS OBVIOUS CHOICE TO LEAD HEALTH-CARE EFFORT

It has long been an article of faith for Republicans — especially when Democrats have controlled Congress — that states are the laboratories of democracy.

CantonRep.com

CONNECTING TARRANT COUNTY

ELECTRONIC POLL BOOKS TO DEBUT IN SPECIAL ELECTION

The next time Stark Countians head out to vote on Election Day, they'll be signing in on iPads instead of bulky paper poll books.

EDITORIAL: TIME TO END SCHOOL TESTING INSANITY

By now everyone knows the definition of insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

HOUSE CLIPS



8/4/17

Central Ohio says state policy is squeezing out local filmmaking

Posted at 6:17 AM, Updated at 6:17 AM

Central Ohio filmmakers, unhappy with what's viewed as an uneven distribution of tax credits, are calling on the state to cap the amount that film projects can collect.

Each year, filmmakers hoping to shoot in Ohio can apply for a 30 percent tax credit through the Ohio Film Office, which operates under the Ohio Development Services Agency. The tax credit is available to productions spending a minimum of \$300,000 per project in the state.

On July 18, the agency announced the 2017-2018 recipients of the film tax credit. Of the \$40 million in available funds, two projects being filmed in Cleveland received \$27.4 million.

Last year, 53 projects were approved for tax credits. Of those, 18 were canceled, 35 are anticipated to still move forward.

John Daugherty, executive director of the Greater Columbus Film Commission, said he is frustrated by the uneven distribution of this year's tax credits.

"In reality, one production could wipe out the entire budget with a setup like this," Daugherty said.

The Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit was created in 2009 as a way to encourage filmmakers to come to the state and develop a stronger film industry.

Because these two projects are using a majority of the state's tax credits, however, Daugherty said some filmmakers have been deterred from shooting in Columbus.

"When I get calls from filmmakers, one of the first things they ask is how our tax credits are," he said.

"And when I tell them they're all gone until July 1, 2018, the conversation stops. It stops them from even applying."

In September 2016, Gov. John Kasich signed legislation raising the tax credit from \$20 million to \$40 million. The legislation also eliminated a \$5 million credit cap per project to allow productions of all sizes compete more fairly.

Removal of the cap, however, makes Ohio less competitive in the film industry, Daugherty said.

"Some sort of cap is in place in every successful state with film tax credits," he said.

After studying incentive programs in other states, Daugherty found Georgia to have one of the biggest film markets in the country. Last year, Georgia gave out \$660 million in film tax credits and received over \$2.6 billion in economic returns, he said.

More than 30 productions applied for film credits across the state this year. Of the \$40 million available, northern Ohio received 60 percent of the credits applied for. Columbus productions received 16 percent.

Last year, central Ohio was home to several different film projects, including a Nike commercial featuring golfer Jason Day and the new Bruce Willis film "First Kill," which was set and filmed in Granville.

Daugherty, along with other Columbus film and art leaders, sent a letter to David Goodman, director of the Development Services Agency, urging a tax-credit cap be put in place.

Todd Walker, a spokesman for the agency, said the agency is not in charge of creating a cap for the tax credit.

"The Ohio Film Office works closely with local and regional film industry partners," Walker said. "While our agency administers the state tax credit, ultimately the legislature sets the law."

He also explained that applications may list one location but end up filming in another.

"We are currently reviewing the 22nd application we received for fiscal 2018. The majority of those were not complete or the applicant declined funding. None of those projects lists its potential location as Columbus, which doesn't prevent them from shooting in Columbus. It just isn't listed on the original application."

Householder may have to return more improper campaign cash

Posted Aug 3, 2017 at 5:00 PM, Updated at 6:16 AM

After refunding an improper \$70,000 campaign contribution from the Summit County Republican Party this week, it now appears Rep. Larry Householder may have to give back even more.

Householder, R-Glenford, the former House speaker who wants to return to the top leadership spot in 2019, also accepted a \$63,000 contribution from the Cuyahoga County Republican Party. It looks like that contribution also is improper, according to a memo issued by current House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger, R-Clarksville.

Householder's fundraiser, Anna Lippincott, said Wednesday that his campaign returned the Summit County money because it was informed that it could accept no more than \$63,500 from county parties in one election cycle.

The campaign thought the Cuyahoga County contribution was acceptable because the return of the Summit County money left them below the limit.

However, according to the memo Wednesday from Rosenberger to all House Republicans, an individual county party cannot give that much to a single legislative candidate unless the candidate's district is located within that county. Householder's district includes Coshocton, Perry and a portion of Licking County.

If a county party is giving to a legislative candidate outside its boundaries, the donation limit is \$12,708, according to the memo. The secretary of state's office confirmed the interpretation.

"In light of recent events, we have received several inquiries, both from within our caucus and others, about contribution limits that candidate campaign committees may accept from various other campaign organizations and individual contributors," Rosenberger wrote.

He attached a campaign contribution limit chart. Majority Republicans in late 2004 passed a number of restrictions on the use of county political party funds after a number of officeholders, including Householder, tried to use them to skirt campaign donation limits.

A message was left seeking comment from Lippincott. Even without the county donations, Householder was the top legislative fundraiser in the first half of 2017, raising nearly \$600,000, excluding both county donations.

The speaker also stressed to members that if they have questions about a contribution, "I highly recommend" they contact the caucus finance director or legal counsel.

Questions have been raised about whether the county party money was funneled to Householder through the Ohio Republican Party. The state party sent Summit County \$70,000 two weeks before the county wrote Householder the \$70,000 check.

The state party also sent money to Cuyahoga County in July before the county's \$63,000 contribution to Householder. The amount of that contribution has not yet been disclosed.

Some of Householder's major contributors also gave money to the Ohio Republican Party's state candidate fund over the past two months, including Bill Lager, founder of the online charter school Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow.

The Ohio Republican Party this week returned \$76,000 in contributions to Lager and one of his top associates, Melissa Vasil; each also made a \$12,000 donation directly to Householder. ECOT's inability to justify its enrollment count led the Ohio Department of Education to order the school to repay \$60 million in state funding.

Craig to run for Senate seat, setting up likely primary

Posted Aug 3, 2017 at 5:14 PM, Updated at 6:25 AM

State Rep. Hearcel Craig has announced he will run for an open Ohio Senate seat in Columbus, setting up a likely Democratic primary.

So far, Craig and Kyle Strickland, a Harvard Law School graduate and attorney at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, are vying to replace term-limited Sen. Charleta Tavares, D-Columbus, in the 15th District.

Craig, a former Columbus councilman who was elected to the House in 2014, is backed by the other two House members based inside the Senate district — Reps. Kristin Boggs and Bernadine Kennedy Kent.

Craig also is endorsed by Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther, who called him “a loyal and dedicated public servant who has served this community with distinction for many years.”

Craig raised about \$13,000 for his campaign in the first half of 2017 and has \$24,500 on hand. Strickland has \$14,300 in his campaign account, and his website touts support from former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown.

“I know that Kyle brings the energy, intelligence and dedication to make the kind of difference in our communities that we so desire,” she said.

The winner of the primary will be heavily favored to win the Democratic-leaning district.

Other activity in legislative races around Franklin County:

- In the 19th House District, which includes Westerville, New Albany and Gahanna, Rep. Anne Gonzales, R-Westerville, is term-limited. She will try to switch chambers by running for the 3rd Senate District seat currently occupied by term-limited Sen. Kevin Bacon, R-Minerva Park.

Gonzales raised \$44,000 in the first half of 2017 and has \$72,200 on hand. However, no candidate had yet reported raising any money in the first half of 2017 for the House district. Bacon has not said whether he will run for the seat.

- A pair of Democrats are raising money in the 21st House District, which includes Dublin and Worthington. Rep. Mike Duffey, R-Worthington, is term-limited.

Troy Doucet is a defense lawyer whose firm handles foreclosure and debt collection cases. He has raised \$48,600 in direct campaign contributions and has \$37,800 on hand.

Dr. Beth Liston of Dublin, an associate professor of internal medicine and pediatrics at Ohio State University, raised \$50,100 and has \$47,200 on hand.

No Republican has yet formed a campaign committee in the district, according to data on the secretary of state's website. Reportedly, at least two people are expected to jump into the race, setting up a possible primary.

Mary Taylor ticked at other GOP candidates for skipping debate

Posted Aug 3, 2017 at 4:59 PM, Updated Aug 3, 2017 at 5:22 PM

Posted Aug 3, 2017 at 4:59 PM Updated Aug 3, 2017 at 5:22 PM

With Mike DeWine and Jon Husted taking a pass, the first proposed debate between Republican candidates for governor is a no-go.

Ohio's chapter of Americans for Prosperity offered to host a live-streamed debate on Sept. 5 before an audience in the Davidson Theatre in the Riffe Center in Columbus.

Attorney General DeWine turned down the offer on Tuesday evening, saying it was too early for a head-to-head face off ahead of the May 2018 primary.

Secretary of State Jon Husted had said he would show up only if all three of the other three candidates did.

That left just Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, R-Wadsworth, in the mix, so the group decided on Thursday to postpone its debate and try again after the November election.

Taylor was not happy. "I'm appalled by the decision to postpone the first debate in the 2018 Republican primary because of other candidates' refusals," Taylor said in a statement.

"My opponents should be willing to engage in a dialogue with Ohio voters. I do not believe that the people of Ohio — or the organizations and media that represent them — should let us off the hook to share and defend our visions for this great state," she said.

Taylor set she would schedule a substitute event at which she would address Ohioans on Sept. 5.

In a statement, Americans for Prosperity-Ohio state director Micah Derry said: "While we disagree with, and are extremely disappointed by, Attorney General DeWine's stated reason for declining the invitation for our Sept. 5 event, it is our view that Ohioans will be best served by hearing from all four candidates. Our goal remains to host a debate that is in keeping with the proud tradition of fair, honest, and open debate so voters can learn where these candidates stand on important issues likes taxes, spending, health care, jobs and the future of Ohio's economy."

The Sinclair Broadcast Group (Channels 6 and 28) and the Buckeye Institute also are part of the debate planning.

Here's the background on the hot-potato debate.

Gibbons adds two more staffers with Kasich ties to campaign team

Posted Aug 3, 2017 at 2:43 PM, Updated Aug 3, 2017 at 3:15 PM

Cleveland banker Mike Gibbons has added two more staffers with ties to Gov. John Kasich in his quest to beat Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel in the Republican Primary for U.S. Senate.

It's widely known in Statehouse circles that Kasich has no love for Mandel, who has opposed some of the governor's fondest initiatives.

However, Gibbons' campaign didn't answer directly when asked if there was any cooperation between Kasich's present team and the challenge being mounted by Gibbons, a political unknown.

"I'm building a team that I've worked with in the past," said Michael Biundo, a senior adviser to Gibbons.

"I'm doing what I think is best for Mike Gibbons."

Biundo, a founder and partner of New Hampshire-based RightOnStrategies, was national senior adviser to Kasich's 2016 presidential campaign.

On Thursday, the Gibbons campaign announced that Matt Wills would serve as a political adviser. A former executive director of the Missouri Republican Party, Wills worked most recently as director of outreach for Kasich's lieutenant governor, Mary Taylor.

The Gibbons campaign also hired Chris Schrimpf as Communications Adviser. Schrimpf served previously as senior communications adviser for Kasich for America.

Schrimpf took to Twitter Thursday to announce his new gig.

"Excited to join a great team to get outsider and businessman @MikeGibbonsOH elected," his tweet said.

The speculation about Kasich ties to the Gibbons effort soon ensued.

"Round 12 of Kasich v. Mandel is now underway," a user named Todd tweeted.

For an outsider, Gibbons is adding surprising fundraising prowess to his flair for attracting heavy hitters to his staff. In his first four weeks on the campaign trail, he raised almost \$700,000.

The winner of the Gibbons-Mandel primary will face Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown.

Editorial: ECOT's no good, really bad week

Posted at 12:01 AM, Updated at 6:39 AM

Ohio's big online charter school — accused of being a massive taxpayer ripoff — has had a really rough week.

On Sunday, The Dispatch traced the story of how Bill Lager, a bankrupt office-supplier, cooked up the lucrative operation that became the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow. He'd literally sketched out the business plan on the back of napkins at a Waffle House — where he was filching free cups of coffee, having photocopied a discount card.

From 2001 to 2016, ECOT reaped more than \$1 billion from Ohio taxpayers. Of that, it paid associated Lager-owned companies more than \$170 million. Today, he owns luxury homes in Ohio and Key West, Florida, all presumably equipped with decent coffee machines.

But it was the “back of the napkin” reference that caught our eye. (Dispatch reporter Catherine Candisky saw pictures of the napkins.) The phrase “This wasn’t written on the back of a napkin” is shorthand in executive circles for meaning “We didn’t come up with some cockamamie scheme. We did research. We consulted experts. This will work.”

The phrase was used at a 2012 Hilliard Planning and Zoning Commission, where a massive development was debated. “I feel like we’re making this up on the back of a napkin,” commission member Kirk Herath complained.

And the words cropped up in a 2011 statement from Ohio Gov. John Kasich defending state efforts to properly regulate the ownership of wild animals. (A man had released his dangerous menagerie before committing suicide.) “We will seek statutory authority,” the governor vowed. “You don’t do it on the back of a napkin.”

ECOT’s founding documents explain a lot. The operation is in trouble with the state for failing to document whether students were actually logging on to get an education, making its state student reimbursements questionable. A Waffle House waitress who later worked for Lager for 16 years, Chandra Filichia, remembers him saying, “It’s not about the (expletive) kids, Chandra; it’s about the money.”

With the Sunday story, Lager’s terrible week was just getting started.

ECOT got hammered again on Tuesday, when a letter was released from state Superintendent Paolo DeMaria agreeing with state Auditor Dave Yost to cut more of ECOT’s funding, holding back \$12.4 million for services ECOT says are being provided this year. That’s because ECOT is still billing the state for high enrollments — despite its own admissions to a court and at board meetings that it has lost a significant number of students.

The deductions come on top \$60 million that the state is subtracting from its payments to ECOT over the next two years, for failing to verify about 60 percent of its enrollment for which it was paid in the audited 2015-16 school year.

Another kick in the teeth came on Thursday, when it was reported the Ohio Republican Party is returning \$76,000 in campaign donations from Lager and a top associate. This followed a decision by former House Speaker Larry Householder, who is seeking his old job, to return \$70,000 to the Summit County Republican Party — the same amount the county party had received two weeks earlier from the state GOP. It looks like Lager’s money was funneled and then refunded.

Householder is no stranger to fundraising scandal; reported strong-arm tactics got him into trouble in the legislature in the early 2000s. If Householder won't touch a dollar, that says a lot.

THE PLAIN DEALER

Rosenberger memo seems to call into question legality of Cuyahoga County GOP donation to House speaker candidate

Updated on August 3, 2017 at 6:45 PM, Posted on August 3, 2017 at 1:39 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- A recent \$63,000 donation from the Cuyahoga County Republican Party to State Rep. Larry Householder's campaign might break state elections law, according to a confidential memo sent Wednesday by Republican Ohio House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger.

The memo from Rosenberger to GOP caucus members says county parties can donate up to \$63,500 per election period to a single Ohio House candidate -- but only if that candidate's legislative district falls within the county's geographical boundaries. For candidates whose districts do not fall within that county, the county party can only give up to \$12,707.

In other words, because Householder's district -- which includes Coshocton and Perry counties and some of Licking County -- is not in Cuyahoga County, it appears the Cuyahoga County Republican Party only was allowed to give Householder \$12,707. A spokesman for Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted on Thursday confirmed the limits as generally described in the memo.

Householder, who served as Ohio House Speaker from 2001 until 2004, has been gearing up to get his previous job back as Ohio House speaker -- including by aggressively raising campaign money -- since shortly after he was elected to his old legislative seat in 2016. Rosenberger will leave the Ohio House in 2018 due to term limits. Although he is not endorsing a successor, he is close to State Rep. Ryan Smith, of Gallia County, who also is interested in being speaker.

Rosenberger's memo, a copy of which was obtained by cleveland.com, opens by alluding to Householder's Wednesday return of \$70,000 to the Summit County Republican Party, as reported by cleveland.com and other state media outlets. Householder returned that money because it exceeded the \$63,500 limit the campaign believed applied, a campaign spokeswoman said Wednesday.

"In light of recent events, we have received several inquiries, both from within our caucus and others about contribution limits that candidate campaign committees may accept from various other campaign organizations and individual contributors," Rosenberger wrote. The memo goes on to lay out

contribution limits in different scenarios -- without referencing Householder explicitly -- and includes a chart produced by the Ohio Secretary of State's office for reference.

Cuyahoga GOP Chair Rob Frost told cleveland.com because Householder is running for Ohio House Speaker in 2019, he thought a larger contribution limit that applies to statewide candidates governs how much money the Cuyahoga County GOP could give. However, state legislative leadership positions, which are chosen by legislators and not voters, are not included in the description of "statewide candidates" contained in state election law.

Frost suggested the Cuyahoga GOP may seek the return of its \$63,000 donation if it's determined that his interpretation is incorrect.

"If we're advised otherwise, we're going to correct our report and make sure we are adhering to the limits," he said. He added: "It appeared clear to us that the speaker is a statewide officer... but if something is unclear, if we get additional clarification, that helps all of us."

A campaign spokeswoman for Householder did not immediately return a Thursday message seeking comment.

A good-government advocate interviewed by cleveland.com on Wednesday, and privately, some GOP House members, have questioned whether the contributions from the Cuyahoga and Summit county parties to Householder were structured to circumvent state campaign contribution limits. Donors are allowed to give larger amounts to state political parties than they are to individual candidates. The state Republican Party made large transfers to the Summit and Cuyahoga county parties around the same time the county parties made the donations to Householder's campaign.

On Wednesday, a spokesman for the Ohio Republican Party said the party had refunded two matching \$38,000 donations from William Lager, founder of the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow charter school, and his assistant. Lager and the assistant, Melissa Vasil, made the donations shortly after giving two \$12,000 donations to Householder's campaign.

Republican National Convention brought cash, visitors, attention to Cleveland, economic studies say: Ohio Politics Roundup

Posted on August 4, 2017 at 6:20 AM

Researchers finished counting the millions the Republican National Convention brought to Cleveland. Corey Lewandowski says he isn't paid a dime from an Ohio payday loan lender. And the Cuyahoga GOP may have to

ask for \$63,000 back from State Rep. Larry Householder. Read more in this edition of Ohio Politics Roundup, brought to you today by Andrew Tobias.

RNC good for CLE: Hard to believe it's already been more than a year since Cleveland played host to Donald Trump's nomination at the Republican National Convention.

Now armed with two studies, local organizers say the event brought in slightly less than expected -- one has a rosier outlook than the other -- but they are OK with that.

"That's because while the short-term economic effects may be fleeting, the community leaders that helped put on the event say they believe the lasting, long-term effects of the convention are what will make the event worth the effort," I write in my report for cleveland.com. The event -- largely seen as safe and well executed in the face of low expectations -- brought positive media attention, helped accelerate long-planned civic projects and, convention planners believe, will lead to an increase in future conventions and other business opportunities."

The success of the RNC shined a positive light on Cleveland internationally.

"Convention officials say they've doubled their average monthly convention leads since 2014, and say the pre-RNC infrastructure investment and RNC-related exposure has resulted in future events already on the books," I write. "They also alluded to possible development opportunities that could bear fruit in the coming years."

"We didn't see the RNC as the one singular thing that would help change the narrative, but we know that the narrative of Cleveland has been changing," said David Gilbert, the tourism chief who led the RNC host committee.

Lewandowski at the City Club: After some pressing from reporters, former Trump Campaign Manager Corey Lewandowski during a Thursday appearance at the City Club of Cleveland "said an Ohio-based payday lender was not a client of his - sort of," writes cleveland.com's Seth Richardson.

"Lewandowski sidestepped a question from an audience member about his association with the [Ohio-based Community Choice Financial] during the traditional question-and-answer segment at the City Club."

But at "a media availability following the event, Lewandowski finally laid out his relationship with Community Choice Financial: he said it is not a client and he is not lobbying on its behalf."

The event got a little testy at times. Also, U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, who is running for governor as a pro-Trump candidate, reserved four tables. Lewandowski, who appeared at the City Club at Renacci's suggestion, appeared at a Renacci fundraiser later Thursday.

Cuyahoga GOP donation to Householder questioned: Without referring to State Rep. Larry Householder directly, a Wednesday memo from Republican House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger suggested a recent \$63,000 contribution Householder received from the Cuyahoga County Republican Party breaks state campaign finance law, according to my Thursday story.

Long story short: Rosenberger's memo said state legislators only can accept a donation that large from a county party if the county is in their district. Cuyahoga County Chairman Rob Frost -- likely incorrectly -- told cleveland.com he thought since Householder, a downstate legislator, is running for House Speaker, that made the donation OK under more lenient giving rules that govern statewide candidates.

The \$63,000 donation, and another \$70,000 donation from the Summit County Republican Party that Householder returned this week, have raised eyebrows in state political circles -- and angered more than a few Republicans -- with some suspecting they were structured to circumvent campaign finance rules.

Trump sides with nursing homes: Cleveland.com's Stephen Koff delves into a proposal that has largely flown under the radar, but is important to nursing home residents and their loved ones.

Koff sets up the story with this scenario: "Your parent is sick and aging. He needs a nursing home. And you've found what looks like a good one.

"But as he is admitted, he is asked to sign a binding agreement stating that if he's ever harmed or believes he was mistreated, he won't sue. Instead, he'll go to binding arbitration and accept the outcome. He promises not to go to court -- and the nursing home asks him to sign that promise before it even gives him a bed.

"This, say critics of the nursing home industry, is a standard practice that President Donald Trump not only wants to maintain but seeks to codify in a new federal rule. The Trump administration not only wants to reverse major parts of a rule signed in 2016 by President Barack Obama that would have banned arbitration agreements as part of the admission process. It also wants to make the rights of nursing homes clear in a federal rule."

"This is the health care story that nobody talks about," said Remington Gregg, an attorney who works on civil rights and similar issues at Public Citizen.

The nursing home industry says it only wants what's best for seniors, who should be able to resolve their complaints without the cost or bother of a court case.

Bidens and bikes: Former Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, will be in Columbus Friday to help open the Pelotonia bike race, reports cleveland.com's Jeremy Pelzer, citing a media report.

The race has raised more than \$143 million for cancer research at Ohio State University. The Bidens are prominent advocates in the fight against cancer.

AFP debate falls apart: The Ohio chapter of Americans for Prosperity had planned a September debate for next year's Republican candidates for governor.

Well, after Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine -- a top campaign official had said AFP's date was too early -- decided to pass on the event, and Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted said he'd only participate if all of the other three GOP candidates did too, AFP said Thursday the event will be postponed until after this November's election.

"While we disagree with, and are extremely disappointed by, Attorney General DeWine's stated reason for declining the invitation for our September 5th event, it is our view that Ohioans will be best served by hearing from all four candidates," AFP Ohio Director Micah Derry wrote in an email.

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor was "ticked" that the debate won't happen as planned, as the Columbus Dispatch put it in a headline. In a statement, according to the Dispatch's Randy Ludlow, she said: "I'm appalled by the decision to postpone the first debate in the 2018 Republican primary because of other candidates' refusals."

Larkin roasts Mandel: Longtime Cleveland political scribe Brent Larkin lit up Ohio Treasurer and Republican U.S. Senate candidate Josh Mandel in a blistering Thursday column.

It ends with a quote from Joe Cicero, who was mayor of Lyndhurst when Mandel was first elected to the town's city council in 2003, that sums up its general thrust: "Josh Mandel is inadequate as a human being."

Mandel strikes back: Larkin's piece got a pretty good ride on social media. Mandel's shared it with this comeback: "When @SherrodBrown poll #s slump, his liberal allies attack. Predictable like clockwork. Join our movement to help us keep the momentum!"

Kasich veteran signs on with Mandel opponent: Chris Schrimpf, a veteran of Gov. John Kasich's 2016 presidential campaign, has signed on with a new Ohio candidate.

Schrimpf will serve as a communications adviser to Mike Gibbons, the Cleveland banker who is running against Mandel in the Republican Senate primary.

Schrimpf is a Kasich insider -- he was one of the handful of people in the harrowing private plane ride to Mackinac Island described in the opener of Kasich's recent book. So his signing on with a Mandel opponent, given Kasich's and Mandel's icy relationship, raised some eyebrows in Ohio political circles. Gibbons is a first-time political candidate and Mandel is seen as a strong favorite.

In an interview, Schrimpf brushed off a question about the intrigue.

"I made a personal decision of who I wanted to work for in the Senate race. And I thought Mike Gibbons is the best overall candidate out there," Schrimpf said

What makes Gibbons the best? "He's an outsider. He has business experience. He's spent his career working and running a business and creating jobs, and I think that is what we need in Ohio, not someone who's been looking to run for Senate for years."

What about Mandel? "I think Josh is a good person. I think Mike Gibbons would make a better U.S. Senator."

The Gibbons campaign also added Matt Wills as a political adviser. Wills previously worked in Lt. Gov. Taylor's office.

PAC Update: A pro-Mandel Super PAC filed its mid-year report this week with the Federal Elections Commission. The Ohio Freedom Fund's two donors were William H. Roj, a resident of Windmere, Fla., who gave \$100,000, and the Geo Group Inc., a private prison operator based in Boca Raton, which gave \$25,000.

A campaign finance filing also shows the Ohio Freedom Fund paid Brook Bodney, who is working as a fundraiser for Mandel's joint fundraising committee, \$25,000 a month between February and June.

New U.S. Attorney confirmed: Cleveland attorney Justin Herdman was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Thursday as the next U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, Koff writes.

Steve Dettelbach -- who held the job for six years under President Barack Obama and is now running for Ohio Attorney General -- had warm words for Herdman, who worked for a time as Dettelbach's top prosecutor for national security cases.

"He is a brilliant, determined and independent person, and I think he'll make a great prosecutor," Dettelbach said.

Passing the torch: Stu Garson, the chairman of the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, followed through on his long-discussed plans to step down from his post on Thursday, cleveland.com's Mark Naymik writes.

"Garson said in a letter to party leaders that he's giving up the unpaid job to allow the party time to elect a successor and prepare for the busy 2018 elections. He said changing a leader next June, when his term expires, would leave the party vulnerable to disorganization and infighting when the party should be focused on helping candidates."

Among those rumored to be angling to replace Garson: County Councilwoman Shontel Brown, whom Naymik said has the backing of U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge and others on the East Side, and Newburgh Heights Mayor Trevor Elkins, who has the backing of former Parma Mayor Dean DePiero and others.

State Rep. Sandra Williams will serve as interim party chair until a successor is chosen. Garson succeeded former Chairman Jimmy Dimora, who is serving a long prison sentence for a corruption conviction.

Naymik's column has some other intel: State Rep. Marty Sweeney, the former Cleveland Council president, is said to be angling for a state Senate seat that's also being eyed by another Democrat, Lakewood State Rep. Nikki Antonio.

Pushback on Portman's Backpage bill: An Internet industry group is among those pushing back against Sen. Rob Portman's effort to make it easier for "prosecutors and sex trafficking victims to hold prostitution-related websites" like Backpage.com liable for crimes, Koff writes.

Portman's bill, which dropped Tuesday, would remove immunity Internet sites have for hosting illegal material they have no role in creating. The Consumer Technology Association, whose board members include executives from Boingo, Amazon, Intel and Twentieth Century Fox, says the immunity is needed for a free and open Internet, and that Portman's bill potentially would expose them to frivolous prosecutions.

IT conspiracy: Cleveland.com's Sabrina Eaton took a look Thursday at the Ohio ties to Imran Awan, an IT specialist who was shared by numerous Democratic members of Congress who was arrested on bank fraud charges last week as he tried to leave the country.

Awan had done work for Florida Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schutz, the former Democratic National Committee chair, as well as Ohio Reps. Joyce Betty, Marcia Fudge and Tim Ryan.

Political police blotter: Former Summit County Councilwoman Tamela Lee "was sentenced Thursday to five years in federal prison for taking thousands in bribes from an Akron grocery store owner," cleveland.com's Eric Heisig writes.

Lee, who was convicted in February, is the former second-in-command at the Summit County Democratic Party. Prosecutors say she took money, food and cigarettes from Omar Abdelqader -- who is affiliated with multiple convenience stores and businesses in the Akron area -- in exchange for her intervention in a criminal case involving his nephews.

THE BLADE

One of America's Great Newspapers

Grant to fund drug-prevention education in classrooms

Published on Aug. 4, 2017

Local law enforcement agencies have received grant funds for drug-prevention education in classrooms this coming school year.

The Ohio Attorney General's Office this week announced more than \$2.7 million to 130 sheriffs' offices and police departments.

Among the 130 agencies awarded are the police departments of Perrysburg, Maumee, Oregon, Sylvania, Sylvania Township, Ottawa Hills, Whitehouse, Wauseon, Bowling Green, and Delta. The sheriffs' offices of Lucas, Wood, Sandusky, Fulton, and Williams counties also received funds.

The grant totals range from about \$2,300 to \$57,700.

The education efforts must include over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse prevention as part of their lessons.

TheVindicator

Sales tax holiday kicks off today

Published: Fri, August 4, 2017 @ 12:06 a.m.

YOUNGSTOWN

Local business owners are hoping to see a sales boost with this weekend's sales-tax holiday.

The state's sales-tax holiday runs today until 11:59 p.m. Sunday. It allows for tax exemptions on purchases of clothing and footwear up to \$75 per item; and all school materials, such as pens, pencils, scissors and paper and instructional materials, up to \$20 per item.

Ohio retail industry leaders say consumers will spend about 10 percent more than last year at brick-and-mortar and online retailers.

"The past couple of years we have seen an increase in sales," said Rose Liguore, owner of Children's Loft in Boardman, about the holiday. "I feel like they should do more than three days."

The Eastwood Mall Complex in Niles is celebrating the tax-free holiday with a family friendly event.

Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman will be visiting from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. The superheros will be in Center Court for autographs and photos. Children wearing their favorite superhero costumes will have the chance to win an Eastwood Mall gift card.

"Aside from the holiday season, the back-to-school season is the biggest time of year for a lot of the stores," said Joe Bell, spokesman for the Cafaro Co., which owns the Niles mall. "Whenever you do a tax-free weekend, it's just an added incentive."

Southern Park Mall in Boardman will have a back-to-school arts, craft and home-based business show through Sunday. Vendors will be in Center Court.

"The sales-tax holiday will likely bring more consumers to shop in the Mahoning Valley during this time," said Sarah Boyarko, senior vice president of economic development for the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber. "The savings will lead to increased buying and spending, and some retailers are offering additional discounts to encourage and entice even more shoppers and spending."

Senate Bill 9, the legislation for the tax-exemption holiday, passed with bipartisan support in both the Ohio Senate and Ohio House. Senate Bill 9 was signed into law by Gov. John Kasich on June 13.

The National Retail Federation's annual survey of national consumer purchases projects total spending for K-12 and college necessities will hit \$83.6 billion, up about 10 percent from last year's \$75.8 billion.

"With 58,000 new jobs added in Ohio since last June, consumer confidence is rising," said Gordon Gough, president/CEO of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, in a statement. "Ohio's sales-tax holiday adds to that confidence by providing great bargains for everyone in the market for clothes, shoes or school materials."

Editorial: Kasich is obvious choice to lead health-care effort

Published: Thu, August 3 2017 @ 12:00 a.m.

It has long been an article of faith for Republicans – especially when Democrats have controlled Congress – that states are the laboratories of democracy.

The GOP argument goes something like this: Governors and state legislatures are in the best position to establish policies to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their residents.

Protecting the homeland is the federal government's chief responsibility, Republicans say. On most other matters, they argue, Congress and the White House should provide financial and other support to the states and refrain from issuing edicts from Washington.

Yet, on the singularly important issue of health care, Republican President Donald J. Trump and the GOP leadership in Congress have largely ignored what governors of both parties have been saying since the repeal and replacement of Obamacare were made the top priority.

But despite the president's demand for quick action, the legislative initiative hit a brick wall in the Senate.

The House passed a bill – with only Republican votes – to replace the Affordable Care Act. However, the reality that millions of Americans would lose health-care coverage they now receive rendered the measure a non-starter in the Senate.

But a Senate version of Trumpcare also was defeated because millions of Americans would be negatively impacted.

Then last week, Trump and the GOP leadership suffered another major setback in the Senate when a barebones bill rolling back a few pieces of President Barack Obama's statute was rejected 51-49. Three Republicans, including Sen. John McCain of Arizona, joined Democrats in voting against the measure.

President's demand

And while the president demanded that Congress not go on to other business before passing a health-care bill he could sign, there was one prominent Republican governor who said he was "glad" the push to scale back the 2010 Obamacare law was rejected.

"To a degree, I'm glad they didn't fulfill this pledge right now," said Ohio Gov. John R. Kasich, who locked horns with Trump last year on the GOP presidential campaign trail. "But they need to work on it. And this is where they should call the Democrats in. And they should demand Democratic participation."

Kasich has long insisted there are some good things about Obamacare that should be preserved, and some bad things that should be changed.

But the governor, who was one of Trump's harshest critics last year, is unwavering in his belief that any new health-care plan must be the result of Republicans and Democrats working together.

Kasich has received national attention for his willingness to speak his mind and take on members of his own party.

Thus, we believe the governor of Ohio is ideally suited to lead a national, bipartisan effort to develop a health-care plan that provides comprehensive, affordable coverage for all Americans, as President Trump pledged in an interview earlier this year with the Washington Post.

While we're aware the relationship between Trump and Kasich is strained at best, the White House should consider the advantages of turning to an individual who not only is respected by other governors, but knows the federal budget as well as any veteran member of Congress.

While serving in the House of Representatives, Kasich was chairman of the Budget Committee. He worked closely with the administration of then Democratic President Bill Clinton to develop a balanced federal budget, the first in decades.

"We can't be done with it yet," the governor said of health care. "And we can't be done going after the underlying rising costs of health care, the problem of entitlements which is going to kill our economy in this country."

While his decision to expand Medicaid under Obamacare so more Ohioans can be covered angered Republicans in the General Assembly, it turns out the expansion is a godsend for thousands who are caught up in the opiate epidemic.

It's time for a new approach to health care coverage, and we believe Kasich is well positioned to lead the bipartisan effort. Other governors, members of Congress and White House officials should be a part of task force .

CantonRep.com
CONNECTING STARK COUNTY

Electronic poll books to debut in special election

Posted Aug 2, 2017 at 4:33 PM

CANTON The next time Stark Countians head out to vote on Election Day, they'll be signing in on iPads instead of bulky paper poll books.

The Stark County Board of Elections will be testing its new electronic poll books during special elections Aug. 8, which are taking place only at 13 poll locations in North Canton and within the Louisville school district where levies are on the ballot.

And starting this November general election, with local officials and issues on the ballot, the board will be rolling out all 360 units made by Tenex Software Solutions in Tampa.

The new devices should reduce the amount of time voters have to wait to cast ballots and reduce errors in signing them in and issuing the correct ballot, said Jeanette Mullane, deputy director of the Stark County Board of Elections.

It also will keep track in real time how many people have voted at a polling location and alert the office if the devices are not on and functioning and if the polling location needs to be resupplied with paper ballots. In addition, the electronic poll books will flag people who've already voted, have been issued absentee ballots or are voting in the wrong precinct. If necessary, they can direct voters to cast provisional ballots.

She stressed the system is separate from the touchscreen voting machines and paper ballots people use to cast a ballot. Each polling location will still have the paper poll books as a backup.

How do they work?

Each electronic poll book consists of an Apple iPad with a 9.7-inch touchscreen in a special case with a camera/scanner that can read the strips on Ohio driver's licenses.

Each device has the names, addresses and other information for all registered voters in Stark County. But only name, address, precinct and year of birth shows up on the screen. The poll workers select screen options with a stylus. They can also enter information from other forms of identification. The iPad is mounted on a stand so poll workers can flip it toward voters who sign in with the stylus. The worker can check the signature against an image of a prior signature.

They then scan a voter access card through a card reader on the iPad case and the electronic poll book will program the correct ballot onto the card.

Each unit comes with a sturdy case, software and a small printer that prints a slip for each voter to provide a backup record on paper that they voted.

The electronic poll books connect to a server at the Board of Elections office through a cellular phone network. Because each contains the county's entire voter registration list, they can still work if the connection were to stop working. They cannot yet transmit information back to headquarters on who has voted because they are not yet certified to perform that function securely.

Because early voting is considered the same as absentee mail-in voting where no ID is required, the electronic poll books will only be used at polling locations on Election Day and not during early voting.

In the past, poll workers had the names of every registered voter on sheets of paper in polling books organized by precinct. After figuring out which precinct the voter was in, poll workers had to flip through the books to find the voter's name. The voter would present their ID and sign their name.

Mullane said the Board of Elections and Tenex are still working on adding a feature where the voter would select if they wish to vote on a party ballot in a primary and which party ballot. That feature would not be used until the May primary.

The devices also have the capability to text or email voters directions to their correct polling location should they show up at the wrong one, Mullane said. Officials at headquarters can also message poll workers in the field.

State allocation

In 2015, the Ohio General Assembly allocated \$12.75 million to cover 85 percent of the cost of electronic polling books. The deadline to apply for the funding was May 31. Each county Board of Elections could only buy equipment certified by the Ohio Secretary of State.

"They went through the security with a fine tooth comb," said Mullane, adding that the devices do not connect with the open Internet.

Each of the devices with printer, shipping and technical support, cost about \$1,410. With \$2,250 for networking equipment, the total cost was \$509,670 with the county paying \$93,621. The county has bought 360 with at least two devices for each polling location. Some may have four or more.

Mullane said the board staff invited several vendors to give demonstrations before deciding on Tenex. The units began arriving in July, the board staff tested them and the Board has been training poll workers on how to use them.

"I think our poll workers are going to like them. I think the voters are going to like it, too," Mullane said.

Editorial: Time to end school testing insanity

Posted Aug 3, 2017 at 8:45 AM

By now everyone knows the definition of insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

On Wednesday, acclaimed speaker/researcher/writer Sir Ken Robinson told an audience comprised mainly of Stark County school administrators, along with members of the local business community, that it is well past time to rethink the basic model for public education in Ohio and across the United States.

We couldn't agree more.

"We have confused raising standards with 'standardization' and testing. It simply has not worked," said Robinson, whose 40-year career has been devoted to teaching and educational research. Instead of rethinking the problem, he said, "We have doubled-down on a testing culture."

It was fitting that his comments — part of a Stark County Educational Service Center and Stark Education Partnership program — came at First Christian Church in Plain Township because, for many in the room, he was preaching to the choir.

Ohio educators have been saying long and loud that the educational testing system and the state's reliance on it needs to be revised, reformed and rethought.

Many expected a reprieve when the state forged its plan for compliance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. Early this year, however, the draft form of that plan roundly was ridiculed for failing to address the large number of standardized tests students are required to take between kindergarten and graduation.

That number stood at 24 in Ohio last school year. The time devoted to testing — and preparing for tests — numbers in the hundreds of hours for school kids each year.

A provision in the recently enacted state budget eliminated two standardized tests. The federal government requires 17 of the 22 tests Ohio will administer this school year.

In Robinson's opinion, such modest changes won't alter the outcomes from most public schools in the United States: students who aren't prepared for their generation's challenges and job opportunities.

"It's not enough to improve the current system," he said, using this analogy: "You couldn't make enough improvements in the steam engine to reach the moon."

So what can be done to help kids reach the moon?

"We must promote innovation and forward-thinking," Robinson said. He is a proponent of STEM education in combination with strong arts programming that promotes critical thinking.

It is expected that Ohio will submit to Washington its revised plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act next month.

We encourage the Ohio Department of Education, under the direction of state Superintendent Paolo DeMaria, to heed Robinson's advice — "We must be creative, innovative, brave and courageous," he said. — and take a lead in pushing back on an over-reliance on testing as the main measurement of success.

It's time to end the testing insanity.

Henson, Libby

From: Cho, Joy
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2017 9:27 AM
To: Westlake, Libby
Subject: RE: E-Clips for 7/27/2017
Attachments: E-Clips (7-27-17).docx

From: Westlake, Libby
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2017 8:47 AM
To: Westlake, Libby <Libby.Westlake@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: E-Clips for 7/27/2017

HOUSE E-CLIPS 7/27/2017

AP Associated Press

CHILD KILLER PUT TO DEATH IN FIRST OHIO EXECUTION IN 3 YEARS

A child killer was put to death with no apparent complications Wednesday in Ohio's first execution since a problem-plagued one 3½ years ago triggered an uproar over the reliability of the lethal injection drugs used by the state.

OHIO'S HIGH COURT STRIKES DOWN TRAFFIC CAMERA RESTRICTIONS

The Ohio Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld cities' use of traffic camera enforcement for a third time, striking down as unconstitutional legislative restrictions that included requiring a police officer to be present.

The Columbus Dispatch *Ohio's Greatest Online Newspaper*

DESPITE COURT RULING, COLUMBUS WON'T RE-INSTALL RED-LIGHT CAMERAS

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled 5-2 Wednesday that the state's restrictions on how cities use red-light cameras are unconstitutional.

PROPOSAL WOULD CLAMP DOWN ON GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARDS

At least four local governments in Ohio have credit cards whose limits are \$1 million or more. Two have limits north of \$5 million.

TOURISMOHIO DIRECTOR CUSICK TO STEP DOWN EFFECTIVE AUG. 1

Mary Cusick has announced that she will step down as director of TourismOhio after three and a half years.

THE DAILY BRIEFING: FRANKLIN COUNTY COULD GET 5 MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES

Franklin County would have five medical marijuana dispensaries under the draft of a proposal by the State Board of Pharmacy.

EDITORIAL: TIME TO TACKLE THE TAX BREAKS

Ohio's legislative leaders have finally appointed members to a special panel that is supposed to take a critical look at the many state tax breaks granted to special interests.

Dayton Daily News

www.daytondailynews.com

AUDITOR: 'IMAGINE FINDING ON THE STREET A CREDIT CARD WITH A \$5 MILLION LIMIT?'

Local governments that use credit and debit cards could be putting taxpayer money at risk because many don't have basic policies in place to prevent theft or misuse, according to a report released Wednesday by Auditor Dave Yost.

SOUTHWEST OHIO ALLOWED TO HAVE 15 MEDICAL MARIJUANA STORES

Southwest Ohio would get 15 medical marijuana dispensaries, including four in Montgomery County, according to draft rules released Wednesday by the Ohio Board of Pharmacy

THE PLAIN DEALER

OHIO LT. GOV. MARY TAYLOR OPENS OHIO STATE FAIR WITH OFFICIAL ICE CREAM FLAVOR: CEREAL & MILK

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor opened the Ohio State Fair Wednesday morning by snipping a ribbon and announcing this year's ice cream flavor: cereal and milk.

AKRON CHILD KILLER RONALD PHILLIPS PUT TO DEATH IN FIRST OHIO EXECUTION IN 3 YEARS

Akron child killer Ronald Phillips was put to death Wednesday, the first execution carried out in Ohio in more than three years.

OHIO BILL AIMS TO STOP LOCAL GOVERNMENT CREDIT, DEBIT CARD MISUSE

State Rep. Dave Greenspan introduced a bill in the Ohio Statehouse on Wednesday that would require local governments to establish credit and debit card policies, after studies by State Auditor Dave Yost's office found misuse - including \$34,000 in Cuyahoga County since 2011.

BREAKING DOWN HEALTHCARE REFORM: OHIO POLITICS ROUNDUP

We're breaking down what's happened so far with healthcare reform. Ohio U.S. Congressman Jim Renacci's campaign for Ohio governor is getting a boost from a familiar Trump supporter. Ohio executed its first prisoner in three years on Wednesday. Ronald Phillips, convicted of killing a child, died by lethal injection.

THE ENQUIRER

HOW MANY POT DISPENSARIES WILL YOUR OHIO COUNTY GET?

Hamilton County will get at least three of the 60 dispensaries to be licensed across the Buckeye State under Ohio's medical-marijuana program, the state announced Wednesday.

THE BLADE

The of Hamilton's Great Newspaper

TRAFFIC CAMERAS GIVEN A GREEN LIGHT BY OHIO SUPREME COURT

The Ohio Supreme Court upheld the city of Dayton's use of stationary traffic-enforcement cameras, striking down several state provisions that limited how cities could use them.

OHIO COMPLETES EXECUTION OF CONVICTED CHILD KILLER RONALD R. PHILLIPS

Convicted child killer Ronald R. Phillips was put to death by the state of Ohio Wednesday with a combination of drugs the state had never used before, but without the complications seen with its last execution.

EDITORIAL: ALL JOBS SHOULD BE WELCOME...INCLUDING THOSE CONNECTED TO MEDICAL MARIJUANA

A new industry may be coming to Toledo: growing marijuana.

HOUSE CLIPS



7/27/17

Child killer put to death in first Ohio execution in 3 years

Today

LUCASVILLE, Ohio (AP) — A child killer was put to death with no apparent complications Wednesday in Ohio's first execution since a problem-plagued one 3½ years ago triggered an uproar over the reliability of the lethal injection drugs used by the state.

Ronald Phillips, 43, was condemned to die for the 1993 rape and slaying of his girlfriend's 3-year-old daughter, Sheila Marie Evans. He was given a three-drug combination never used in Ohio before.

As he lay on the execution table, he apologized to the child's aunt and half-sister, who were there to watch him die for his crimes.

"I know that Sheila Marie didn't deserve what I did to her," he said.

Donna Hudson, the victim's aunt, said: "God forgave him, but, I'm sorry, I don't think I can."

Phillips' case could open the way for the full resumption of capital punishment in Ohio, which has 26 executions scheduled through 2020, the next on Sept. 13.

"I have confidence that we are going to continue to do this in a dignified, peaceful, humane way, and I'm committed to do that," Ohio Prisons Director Gary Mohr said just before Phillips' execution.

It was Ohio's first execution since 2014, when an inmate gasped and snorted repeatedly during a procedure that took an unusually long 26 minutes and involved a never-before-tried drug combination.

Gov. John Kasich reacted by putting all executions on hold. The delays continued when the state had trouble finding new supplies of drugs and death row inmates sued over Ohio's proposed new three-drug combination, saying it would amount to cruel and unusual punishment.

The drugs include midazolam, a sedative used in some problematic executions in Ohio, Arkansas and Arizona. The inmates were backed up by 15 pharmacology professors who said midazolam is incapable of inducing unconsciousness or preventing serious pain.

Phillips lost his final appeal on Tuesday when the U.S. Supreme Court denied his requests for more time to pursue the challenge to the new drug combination or his claim that he deserved mercy because he was only 19 at the time of the crime.

He died about 10 minutes after giving his final statement. He showed no signs of distress. His chin dropped and his belly heaved slightly as the lethal drugs were administered.

Allen Bohnert, a public defender who worked on the case, contended Phillips' execution was not problem-free, it just looked that way. He said the executioners accelerated administration of a paralytic to mask Phillips' pain.

"Hiding the physical evidence does not change the reality that Ohio used a painful and unnecessary method of execution to kill Ron Phillips today," Bohnert said.

It was the nation's 15th execution of the year.

Phillips staved off lethal injection three other times, including in 2013, when he made a last-minute request to donate a kidney to his mother and possibly his heart to his sister. The request was ultimately denied. His mother has since died.

Ohio's high court strikes down traffic camera restrictions

Today

CINCINNATI (AP) — The Ohio Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld cities' use of traffic camera enforcement for a third time, striking down as unconstitutional legislative restrictions that included requiring a police officer to be present.

The ruling was 5-2 in support of the city of Dayton's challenge of provisions in a state law that took effect in 2015. The city said it improperly limited local control and undercut camera enforcement that makes cities safer by reducing red-light running and speeding. Dayton and other cities including Toledo and Springfield said the law's restrictions made traffic cameras cost-prohibitive.

The court Wednesday ruled illegal requirements in the law that an officer be present when cameras were being used, that there must be a lengthy safety study and public information campaign before cameras are used, and that drivers could be only ticketed if they exceeded the posted limit by certain amounts, such as by 6 mph in a school zone.

A majority opinion written by Justice Patrick Fischer found those three restrictions "unconstitutionally (limit) the municipality's home-rule authority without serving an overriding state interest."

The state's highest court has twice previously ruled for cities on cameras.

Justice Patrick DeWine wrote a dissenting opinion, saying the legislation was “a compromise” meant to deal with concerns that cameras were being misused to generate revenue while allowing municipalities “some opportunity” to employ cameras.

“Today’s decision has the unfortunate impact of further muddling a body of law that is already hopelessly confused,” DeWine wrote. Justice William O’Neill also dissented.

The state had contended that the law was within the legislature’s powers as a “statewide and comprehensive” way to regulate enforcement of traffic. Supporters said officers were needed to detect camera malfunctions and situations that clearly call for an exemption from ticketing.

An Ohio state senator who helped write the law called the decision a “Pyrrhic victory” for home-rule cities and villages and pledged Wednesday that legislators will keep fighting “policing for profit.” Cincinnati Republican Sen. Bill Seitz said the Legislature has “other tools in the tool kit,” such as reducing amounts cities and villages receive through the state’s local government fund

Dayton police, whose use of traffic cameras goes back nearly 15 years, were already planning to soon resume using officer-manned fixed cameras at certain sites, saying traffic crashes had shot up after camera enforcement halted. Dayton is also among cities equipping some officers with new hand-held cameras to record violations.

City spokeswoman Toni Bankston said Dayton is pleased with the court’s decision.

“In light of this ruling, we will begin the process of reviewing and analyzing the best way to proceed with our enforcement program,” Bankston said in a statement.

Ohio has been a battleground for years in the debate across the United States over camera enforcement. Critics say cities use them to boost revenues while violating motorists’ rights. Supporters say they increase safety and free up police for other crime fighting.

Attorney General’s spokesman Dan Tierney said Wednesday the case couldn’t be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court because it involved a solely state law.

This story has been corrected to show that Dayton hasn’t resumed use of traffic cameras.
